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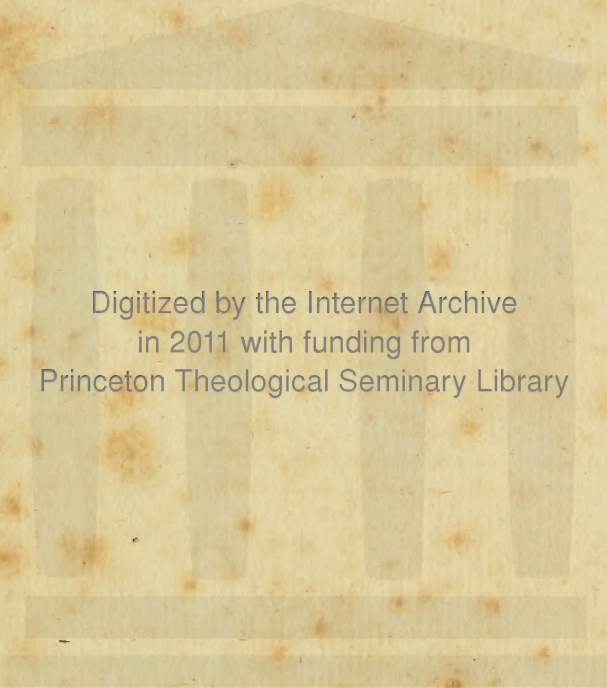
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THE  
H I S T O R Y  
OF  
GREAT BRITAIN,

FROM THE  
FIRST INVASION OF IT BY THE ROMANS  
UNDER JULIUS CÆSAR.

WRITTEN ON A NEW PLAN.

✓  
BY ROBERT HENRY, D.D.

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SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIANS OF SCOTLAND, AND OF  
THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH.

THE SECOND EDITION,

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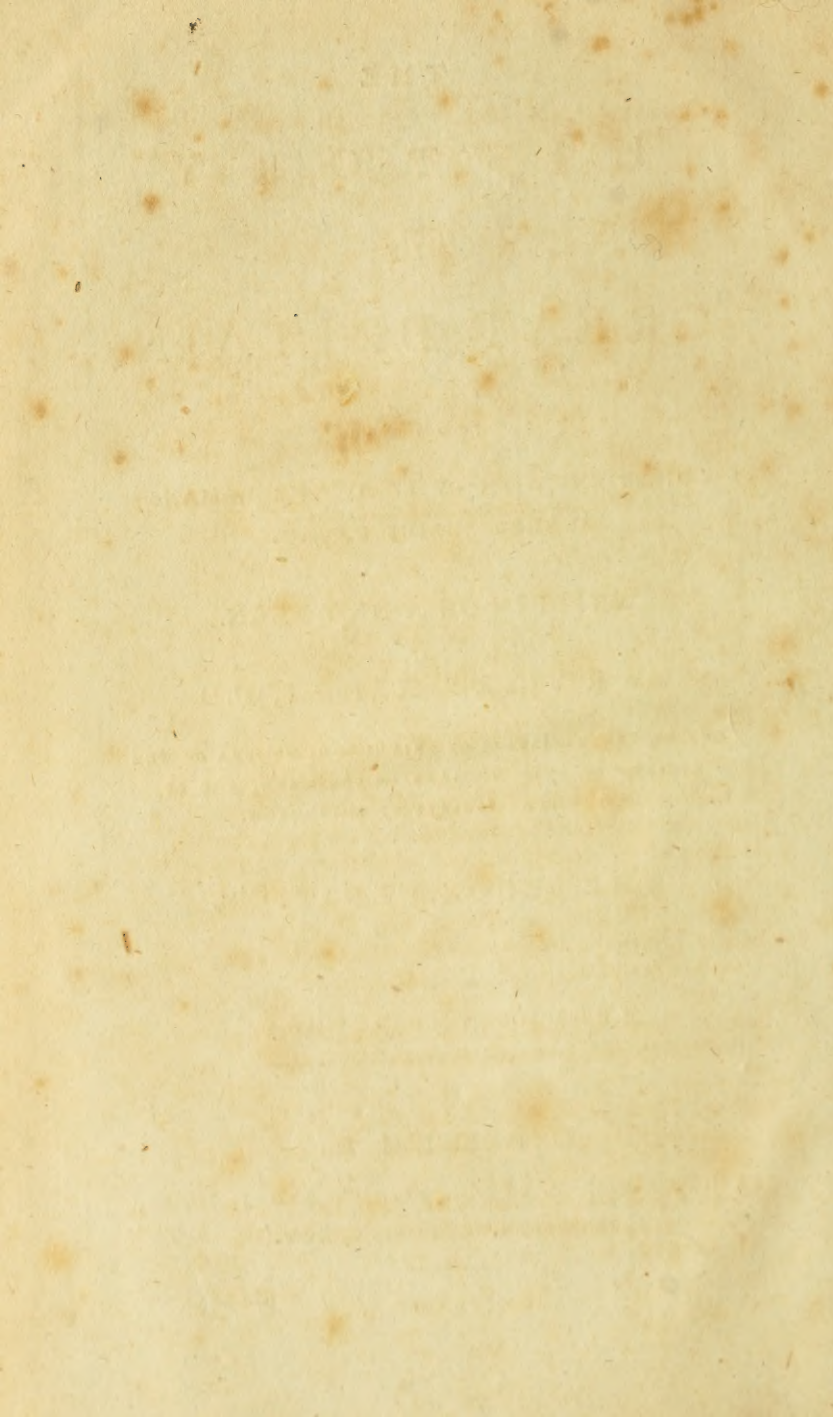
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MDCCLXXXIX.





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THE  
H I S T O R Y  
O F  
G R E A T B R I T A I N.

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B O O K II.

C H A P. I.

*The civil and military history of Great Britain, from the arrival of the Saxons, A. D. 449, to the landing of William Duke of Normandy, A. D. 1066.*

S E C T I O N I.

*From the arrival of the Saxons, A. D. 449, to A. D. 600.*

THE succours which the British ambassadors (mentioned in the conclusion of the first chapter of the first book of this work) obtained from the Saxons, came over from the continent in three large ships, under the conduct of two brothers, called *Hengist* and *Horfa*, and landed in the isle of Thanet. They were received with joy by the dispirited Britons; who assigned them a place for their head-quarters, in the island where they landed; and made them the most ample promises of all necessary provisions, and suitable rewards for their assistance (1).

A. D. 449,  
to 600  
Arrival of  
the Sax-  
ons.

(1) Chron. Saxon. p. 12. Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. i. c. 15.



A. D. 449,  
to 600.

Saxons  
and Bri-  
tons de-  
feat the  
Scots and  
Picts.

As soon as these preliminaries were settled, the Saxons joined the British army, and marched against the Scots and Picts, who had now pushed their destructive ravages as far as Stamford. Near that place a bloody battle was fought, in which the Britons, instructed, animated, and assisted by their new allies, obtained a complete victory over their old enemies, and obliged them to retire into their own country (2). Transported with joy at this victory, they loaded the Saxon chiefs, and their principal followers, with benefits; which made them in no haste to abandon a country where they were so well received (3).

Arrival of  
another  
army of  
Saxons.

The Britons, for some time, were so far from entertaining any jealousy of their new allies, that they readily consented to a proposal made by Hengist, of sending for a reinforcement of his countrymen, as a further security against any future attempts of their ancient enemies. This reinforcement, consisting of about five thousand of the bravest warriors, came over in seventeen ships, and joining the army under Hengist, added greatly to his strength and confidence (4).

The Sax-  
ons resolve  
to settle  
in Britain.

It is impossible to discover whether or not Hengist and Horsa, and their followers, when they first embarked in this expedition, had formed a design of making good a settlement for themselves in Britain; but it plainly appears, from their conduct, as well as from the testimony of historians, that they entertained such a design soon after their arrival (5). The beauty and fertility of the British plains excited them to wish, and the unwarlike character and divided state of their inhabitants, encouraged them to hope, for a solid establishment in this rich and pleasant country. As soon, therefore, as the two Saxon chieftains saw themselves at the head of a considerable army of brave determined warriors, they prepared to seize some part of those territories which they had been invited to defend. With this view they concluded a separate peace with their enemies the Picts, against whom they had engaged to wage perpetual war, and began to quarrel with their friends the Britons about their provisions and promised rewards, threatening to do

(2) Id. *ibid.* II. Huntingdon, l. 2.

(3) R. H. *pen. Polychron.* l. 5. (4) *Gildæ Hist.* c. 23.

(5) *Bede Hist. Eccles.* l. 1, c. 15.

themselves justice, as they called it, by force of arms; and even putting these threats in execution, by destroying the country about them with fire and sword, and killing all who fell into their hands (6). A. D. 449,  
to 600.

The unhappy Britons were now effectually awakened from their delusive dreams of enjoying peace and safety under the protection of the Saxons, and fully convinced of their folly in calling so fierce and faithless a people to their assistance. In their first consternation, great multitudes abandoned their country, and fled into that part of Gaul, which about this time began to be called *Britanny*, from its being chiefly inhabited by Britons; others took shelter in the most impenetrable woods, where they led a wretched savage kind of life, or even perished with hunger; while not a few, in order to preserve their lives, submitted to the most abject slavery. Many, however, on this occasion acted a more manly part, and determined to defend themselves, and their country, to the last extremity (7). These brave and virtuous Britons, despising Vortigern, their former leader, for his vices, and hating him for his unfortunate counsels, and too intimate connections with their enemies, declined fighting under his banner, and placed his son Vortimer at their head (8). Various  
conduct of  
the Britons  
on this oc-  
casion.

A long and cruel war now broke out between the Saxons and Britons, in which many battles were fought, of which we have but very imperfect accounts. In one of these actions near Ailesford, Horfa, one of the Saxon chieftains, was slain, by which his brother Hengist became sole commander of their united forces. This illustrious chief, about two years after, gained a great victory over the Britons, at Creecanford, now Crayford, which gave him the possession of all Kent, and emboldened him to assume the name of *king*, having before this contented himself with the humbler title of *heretogen*, or *general* (9). This was the first Saxon kingdom, that of Kent, founded, about eight years after the arrival of Hengist and his followers in this island. War be-  
tween the  
Saxons  
and Bri-  
tons.

The new monarch of Kent, in order to strengthen the Saxon interest in Britain, and procure comfortable settle- Arrival of  
another

(6) Id. *ibid.* Gild. Hist. c. 23, 24, 25.

(7) Gildæ Hist. c. 23, 24, 25.

(8) Nennii Hist. c. 45.

(9) Chron. Saxon. an. 455. 457. Higden. Polychron. l. 5. an.

A. D. 449.  
to 520.

army of  
Saxons.

ments for his family and friends, invited his son Odo, and his nephew Ebbessa, to collect as many followers as they could, and come over into this island. These youthful chieftains complied with the invitation; and having plundered the Orkney isles in their passage, arrived with a fleet of forty sail on the coast of Northumberland; of which, together with all the country to the triuh of Forth, they took possession, without meeting with much opposition (10). This was probably owing to the depopulated state of the country between the two Roman walls, which had been a scene of war and devastation for near two centuries, and to the alliance and friendship which at this time subsisted between the Picts and Saxons. Thus early were the south-east parts of Scotland, as well as the north of England, inhabited by the Saxons; and in those parts, as well as in the south of Britain, their language and their posterity have continued to the present times.

Progress of  
the war  
between  
the Saxons  
and Bri-  
tons.

Though Hengist had gained several victories over the Britons, they did not long allow him to enjoy his new kingdom in tranquillity. On the contrary, they fought many battles against him with various success, under the conduct of Aurelius Ambrosius, who was descended of a Roman family, and inherited the martial virtues of that glorious people (11). But Hengist obtained a great victory, A. D. 465, at Wippidleece, where no fewer than twelve British chieftains were slain, and only one Saxon chief, named *Wippid*, from whom the place of battle derived its present name (12). About eight years after, he gained another still more decisive victory; which struck such a terror into the Britons, that they gave him little further disturbance during the remainder of his reign, which ended with his life, A. D. 488 (13).

Æsc, Odo,  
Hermen-  
ric, and  
Ebbesset,  
successive-  
ly kings of  
Kent.

Hengist, the first king of Kent, and first Saxon monarch in Britain, was succeeded by his son Æsc, who reigned over his little kingdom twenty-four years in profound tranquillity, and left it in that condition to his son Odo, who began his reign A. D. 512 (14). This prince was not so fortunate as his father had been; for in his reign, which lasted twenty-two years, the coun-

(10) Nenn. Hist. c. 37.

(11) Pict. Hist. Bedl. l. 1. c. 16.

(12) Chron. Sax. A. D. 465.

(13) L. 1. lib. 1.

(14) Will. Malm. c. 1.



tries of Essex and Middlesex were taken from him by the East-Saxons. Oëto was succeeded by his son Hermenric, A. D. 524, who reigned thirty-two years, but performed nothing memorable (15). Ethelbert, the son and successor of Hermenric, was the greatest of the Kentish kings. In a long and prosperous reign of fifty-six years, he obtained many victories, enlarged his dominions, and gained a great ascendant over all the other Saxon princes of his time. Ethelbert died A. D. 616, and was succeeded by his son Eadbald, whose history will be pursued in the second section of this chapter.

A. D. 449,  
to 600.



The success of Hengist and his followers, encouraged other Saxon chiefs to try their fortunes, and attempt settlements in this island. One of these, named *Ælla*, arrived A. D. 477, with his three sons, Cymen, Wlencing, and Cissa, and a train of martial followers. They landed at Cymenshore, near Wittering, defeating a body of Britons, who attempted to prevent their landing (16). *Ælla* defeated the Britons in a great battle at Mecedeburn, A. D. 485, and took and destroyed Andereda, the strongest fortress in those parts, A. D. 490 (17). After these successes he assumed the name of *king*, and founded the kingdom of *Sussex*; in the government of which he was succeeded by his youngest son Cissa, A. D. 515, who had a very long reign. Before the death of Cissa this little kingdom became so inconsiderable, that his immediate successor is not so much as named in history (18).

Arrival of  
another  
army of  
Saxons,  
who found-  
ed the  
kingdom  
of *Sussex*.

Cerdic, another Saxon chieftain, with his son Cynric, and a band of chosen warriors, arrived in Britain A. D. 495, and landed in the west, at a place which from him was afterwards called *Cerdicshore* (19). On the very day of his landing, he engaged and defeated an army of Britons, and from thenceforward continued to wage war against them without intermission, for more than twenty years, with various success (20). In the first year of the sixth century, Cerdic received a reinforcement from Germany, under the command of Porta, and his two sons, Bieda and Megla, who landed at a place since called *Portsmouth*. By the assistance of this reinforcement,

Arrival of  
other Sax-  
on armies,  
which  
founded  
the king-  
dom of  
*Wessex*.

(15) Hen. Hunt. l. 2.

(16) Chron. Saxon. p. 14.

(17) Id. *ibid.*

(18) Hen. Hunt. l. 2.

(19) Chron. Saxon. p. 15.

(20) Id. *ibid.*

A. D. 449, he prosecuted the war against the Britons with greater vigour than he had done before, and gained so many victories, that he assumed the title of *king*, and founded the kingdom of the West-Saxons, A. D. 519 (21).

Ambrosius and Arthur commanded the Britons against Cerdic. Cerdic, the founder of the West-Saxon kingdom, met with a more steady and obstinate resistance from the Britons, than any of the other Saxon chieftains who founded kingdoms in this island. This circumstance was probably owing to the superior courage and abilities of Aurelius Ambrosius, and the famous prince Arthur, who successively commanded the British forces against Cerdic and his followers. The first of these great generals, to whom the Britons gave the name of *Natanleod* (preserver of the people), fell in battle with five thousand of his bravest troops, A. D. 508 (22). The great actions of Arthur, who succeeded Ambrosius in the command of the British armies, have been celebrated in such romantic strains by the British bards, and blended with so many extravagant fables by Jeffrey of Monmouth, that not only the truth of those actions ascribed to him, but even the reality of his existence, hath been called in question (23). There seems, however, to be sufficient evidence, that there was a brave and virtuous prince of this name, in those times, who had the chief command among the Britons, and at their head obtained several victories over the Saxons, though it certainly exceeds the power of the greatest human sagacity to distinguish what is true from what is fabulous in his history (24). The last and greatest of those victories was that of Mount-badon, near Bath, A. D. 520 (25). This victory gave so great a check to the arms of Cerdic, and his son Cynric, that they made little or no progress in their conquests for several years. But having received some fresh reinforcements from the continent, they defeated the Britons, A. D. 527, at a place, from thence called *Cerdic'sford*, and about three years after made an entire conquest of the isle of Wight (26). In a word, Cerdic, after a long and bloody struggle of near forty years, subdued those countries which are now called *Hampshire*,

(21) *Ibid.* p. 17. Hen. Huntingdon, l. 2.

(22) *Chron. Saxon.* p. 18. (23) *Gaulfrid. Monum.* l. 9, 10.

(24) See *Biographia Britannica*, vol. 1. p. 197, &c.

(25) *Hist. Cerdic*, p. 6. Hen. Hunt. l. 2.

(26) *Chron. Saxon.* p. 18.

*Dorsetshire, Wiltshire, Berkshire, and the isle of Wight.* A. D. 449, to 600.

At his death, which happened A. D. 534 (27), he was succeeded in the throne of Wessex by his valiant son Cynric, who had been the companion of all his toils and victories. This prince reigned twenty-six years, and supported the character which he had obtained, of a brave and prudent general, by gaining several victories over the Britons (28). Cynric was succeeded, A. D. 560, by his son Ceaulin, who was still more ambitious and enterprising than his father and grandfather had been. Being assisted by his brother Cutha, he defeated Ethelbert king of Kent, A. D. 568; and nine years after obtained a great victory over the Britons, at Durham in Gloucestershire, killing three of their princes, Commail, Condidan, and Parinmail (29). By these and several other victories, he enlarged the boundaries of the West-Saxon kingdom, by adding those countries which are now called *Devonshire* and *Somersetshire*, to his former territories. At length, however, this prince experienced a most grievous reverse of fortune, both in his family and government; for he lost by death his valiant brother Cutha, and a son of the same name, no less valiant. The other Saxon princes, dreading his ambition, formed a confederacy against him, into which some of the Britons also entered; and he was defeated by their united forces at Wodensburgh, A. D. 591. To complete his misfortunes, his own subjects revolted, and drove him into exile, where he soon after died (30). The unhappy Ceaulin was succeeded by his nephew Ceolric, who reigned only five years, and dying A. D. 596, left his dominions to his brother Ceolwolf. This prince, being of a martial spirit, had wars not only with the Britons, but also with the Saxons, Scots, and Picts, which continued through his whole reign of fourteen years (31).

The Saxons having thus far succeeded in their attempts, and established the three small kingdoms of Kent, Suffex, and Wessex, other bands of adventurers, from the same country, were thereby encouraged to try their fortunes, and endeavour to obtain settlements in this island. These adventurers landed on the east

The arrival of other armies of Saxons, and founding of the kingdoms of the East-Saxons, East-Angles, and Mercians.

(27) Chron. Saxon. p. 18.

(28) Ibid. p. 19, 20.

(29) Ibid. p. 22.

(30) W. Malml. l. i. c. 2.

(31) d. ibid.



A. D. 449. coasts of Britain, at different times, and under different leaders, whose names and actions have not been preserved in history (32). By degrees, however, these unwelcome guests gained so firm a footing, and penetrated so far into the country, that three of their chieftains assumed the title of *kings*, and founded three other small kingdoms in the east and midland parts of Britain. These were the kingdoms of the East-Saxons, the East-Angles, and Mercians. The territories which composed the kingdom of the East-Saxons, were chiefly dismembered from that of Kent; and consisted of the counties of Essex, Middlesex, and part of Hertfordshire: its first monarch was named *Erkenwin*; but the time when he began to reign, and the actions which he performed, are equally unknown (33). The kingdom of the East-Angles consisted of the counties of Cambridge, Suffolk, and Norfolk: its first king was *Uffa*, who began his reign A. D. 575; and from him all his successors in that kingdom had the surname of *Uffings*. The kingdom of the Mercians comprehended all the middle counties of England to the east of the Severn, and south of Yorkshire and Lancashire: its first sovereign was *Creda*, who began his reign A. D. 585 (34). The princes who reigned in these three petty kingdoms in the sixth century, performed nothing worthy of being recorded in history.

Kingdom  
of North-  
umber-  
land  
founded.

Though a colony of Saxons (as hath been already mentioned) had settled on the east coast of Britain, between the walls of Severus and Antoninus Pius, not long after the middle of the fifth century, we know very little of the history of that colony for the greatest part of a century after their arrival. These Saxons being at a great distance from their countrymen in the south, and surrounded with enemies on all hands, continued long in a weak condition; and being also under the command of several petty chieftains, none of these had the presumption to assume the name of *king* (35). At length, however, they received a very powerful reinforcement from Germany in a fleet of fifty ships, which arrived at Flamborough A. D. 547, under the command of *Ila*;

(32) Hen. Hunt. l. 2.

(33) Id. ibid.

(34) W. Malm. l. 1. c. 3.

(35) Id. ibid.

who,

who, being a prince of great wisdom and valour, assumed the royalty, and founded the kingdom of Northumberland, or rather of Bernicia, soon after his arrival (36). The castle of Bamburgh, built by Ida, was the capital of this most northerly kingdom of the Saxons; which comprehended not only the present county of Northumberland, but the counties of the Merse and the three Lothians, or the whole eastern coast of the ancient Roman province of Valentia. Ælla, another Saxon chieftain, having subdued all the country between the Humber and the Tyne, founded another little state in these parts, which was called the kingdom of *Deira* (37). These two kingdoms were united, not long after, in the person of Ethelfrid, the grandson of Ida; who married Acca, the daughter of Ælla; and having expelled her brother Edwin, added his territories to his own, and thereby founded the powerful kingdom of Northumberland (38.)

A. D. 449.  
to 600.

In this manner were the seven Saxon kingdoms, commonly called *the heptarchy*, founded in that part of Britain, which soon after began to be called *England*, from the Angles, which were the most numerous and powerful tribe of the Saxons (39).

The heptarchy completed.

Before we prosecute the history of these Saxon kingdoms any further, it may not be improper to take a very short view of the state of the other nations who inhabited Britain in this period, and of the most important events which happened among these nations.

Though the Saxons had by degrees dispossessed the Britons of the most valuable part of their country, in which they had erected seven kingdoms; yet that unhappy people still continued to possess a very large tract on the west coast of Britain, extending from the Land's-end to the mouth of Clyde. All the inhabitants of this extensive country were descended from the same ancestors, spoke the same language, professed the same religion, and were in all respects the same people, except that they were not united under one sovereign, which would have rendered them invincible, but subjected to a prodigious number of petty tyrants, who were almost con-

British states.

(36) Chron. Saxon. p. 19. Hen. Hunt. l. 2. c. 3.

(37) Bede Hist. Eccles. l. 2. c. 1. Annal. Beverl. p. 78.

(38) W. Malms. l. 1 c. 3. (39) Camd. Britan. p. 168.

A. D. 446  
to 600.

stantly at war with one another, and seldom joined their forces to resist the common enemy. Gildas, the most ancient of our historians, who was himself a Briton, and flourished in those times, gives a most shocking character of five of these princes, who were cotemporaries, and domineered in their several districts over their wretched subjects (40). It would be highly improper, on many accounts, to swell this work with laborious investigations of the genealogies of those ancient British princes, or minute details of their mutual wars, which could not be rendered either instructive or entertaining. If any of our readers have a taste for such inquiries, they may consult the works quoted below (41). It is sufficient to observe, that in this extensive tract of country there were four considerable states or principalities in this period, viz. those of Cornwall, South-Wales, North-Wales, and Cumberland. In each of these states there was commonly one prince who was more powerful than the other chieftains or heads of clans, and had some degree of authority over them, though each of these chieftains was a kind of sovereign in his own little district.

State of  
the Scots  
and Picts,

That part of Britain which lay on the north side of the wall of Antoninus Pius, and of the friths of Forth and Clyde, was inhabited, in this period, by two warlike nations, the Scots and Picts; the former possessing the western, and the latter the eastern division of that country. These nations made a considerable figure in the third, fourth, and fifth centuries, by their frequent incursions into the Roman provinces, which are recorded by the Greek and Roman writers; but after the departure of the Romans, and the arrival of the Saxons, we lose sight of them almost entirely for some time; and their history becomes remarkably obscure for more than two centuries. This obscurity is not owing to their having performed no actions worthy of remembrance in this period, but either to their having had no historians to preserve the memory of those actions, or to their having lost the works of those historians, by the in-

(40) *Epistola Gildæ*, p. 1, 2, 3.

(41) *Mr. Borlase's antiq. Cornwall*, c. 13. *Mr. Rowland's Mon. antiqua. Brit.* p. 134. *Harding's Chron.* *Mr. Vaughan's Dissertation on British chronol.* and *British antiquities revived.* *Cate's Hist.* vol. 1. p. 210, &c.



injuries of time, and various accidents (42). From A. D. 449, to 600. the time of the battle between the Britons and Saxons on one side, and the Scots and Picts on the other, near Stamford, A. D. 449, to the beginning of the sixth century, we know very little with certainty of the history of these two last nations. It is highly probable, that, during this period, they were engaged in wars against each other, or against their common enemies the Saxons settled between the walls: but we have no authentic accounts of the particulars of these wars. Many modern writers have indeed filled up this chasm in the annals of the northern parts of Britain, with formal details of the names, actions, characters, and successions of the kings of the Scots. But as a little truth is of more value in history than many fables, we shall not abuse our readers with a repetition of these fabulous, or at best uncertain tales (43).

It must, however, be acknowledged, that though we do not know the particulars of those wars which were carried on by the Scots and Picts in the latter part of the fifth century, it seems very probable that the Scots gained some advantages in these wars, extended their territories, and became a more powerful and better regulated nation, than they had been in any former period. For there is sufficient evidence, from several monuments of the ancient history of Scotland, which have escaped all the injuries of time, and the rage of enemies, that about the beginning of the sixth century, most probably A. D. 503, all the different clans of the Scots in Britain were united and formed into one nation, by Fergus the son of Erth, who was certainly the first monarch of the Scots nation of whose existence we have any tolerable evidence (44).

The dominions of this first king of Scots are described by two of our most ancient chronicles, in these words: "Fergus filius Erth fuit primus qui de femine Chonare suscepit regnum Albanie, *i. e.* a monte Drumalban usque ad mare Hiberniæ, et ad Inche-Gall." The sea of Ireland is a boundary which needs no explanation. The western islands of Scotland are called *Inche-Galle*

Fergus  
King of  
Scots.

Boundaries of the  
kingdoms  
of the  
Scots and  
Picts.

(42) See Innes's critical essay, vol. 2. p. 549—586.

(43) See Fordun, Boece, Major, Buchanan, Major, &c.

(44) See the four old chronicles of the kings of Scotland, published by father Innes, in his Appendix, No. 4, 5, 6, 7.

A. D. 449, by the highlanders of the continent to this day. The only question is concerning the mountain Drumalban, the eastern boundary of this first kingdom of the Scots, which is believed, by our most intelligent antiquaries, to be that ridge of high mountains which runs all the way from Lochlomond, near Dumbarton, on the west, to the frith of Tayne, on the east (45). All the rest of Scotland, to the north of the frith of Forth, and the wall of Antoninus, was in the possession of the Picts, and constituted the Pictish kingdom, which was at least as ancient as that of the Scots, though its antiquities are still more obscure, occasioned by the total subversion of that kingdom, and destruction of all the ancient monuments of its history, in the ninth century.

Kings of  
the Scots.

Fergus I. king of Scots, according to the only authentic monuments of our ancient history, reigned three years; and dying A. D. 506, was succeeded by his son Domangart, or Dongard; who reigned five years, and was succeeded, A. D. 511, by his son Congal (46). This last prince, after a reign of twenty-four years, dying A. D. 535, was succeeded by his brother Gauran, who reigned twenty-two years. Though Gauran, at his death, left a son named *Edhan*, he was succeeded by his nephew Conal, the son of Congal, who reigned fourteen years, and died A. D. 571. The later Scots historians, Fordun, Beece, Major, and Buchanan, who are mere moderns in comparison of those remote ages, have inserted several kings between Fergus and his great-grandson Edhan the son of Gauran, whose names are not to be found in any of our genuine and really ancient monuments, who are therefore to be considered as the creatures of their own invention (47). These writers have also ascribed a variety of actions and adventures to all these princes, real and imaginary (which may be seen in their works), for which they seem to have had little or no authority, and which, on that account, merit little or no attention from the friends of truth and genuine history.

Aidan  
king of  
Scots.

Edhan, or Aidan, the son of Gauran, succeeded his cousin Conal the son of Congal, A. D. 571. A few faint

(45) Dr. McPherson's Dissertation, diss. 18. p. 312.

(46) See the ancient chronicles, apud Innes, Appen. No. 4, 5, 6.

(47) Innes's Critical Essays, vol. 2. p. 689, &c.

faint rays of light now begin to appear in the history of the Scots. The name, and some of the actions of Aidan, are mentioned by several ancient authors, who are not unworthy of credit, and who lived at no great distance from the times in which he flourished. On the death of Conal, Aidan returned from Ireland (where he had lived some years in a kind of exile), and was advanced to the throne, chiefly by the influence of St. Columba, who was, at that time, the great oracle of the Scots and Picts, in civil as well as religious matters (48). Soon after his accession, he established a more regular administration of justice in his dominions, and exerted himself in suppressing several bands of robbers with which the country was infested (49). While he was thus employed, a war broke out between him and Brude king of the Picts, who refused to deliver up certain fugitives from justice, who had taken shelter in his territories: a battle was fought near Dunkeld, in which Aidan obtained the victory, but with the loss of one of his sons, and many of his subjects. St. Columba, who was equally revered by both the Caledonian monarchs, hearing of these scenes of slaughter with much concern, interposed his good offices, and brought about a peace (50). Aidan, after this, was engaged in two successive wars, against Brude king of the Picts, and Ethelfred king of the Northumbrian Saxons; in the course of which several bloody battles were fought with various success (51). In the last of these battles, which happened A. D. 603, at a place called *Dogfustane*, being deserted by his allies the Strathcluyd or Cumbrian Britons, he received a total overthrow, in which he lost the greatest part of his army (52). The good old king did not long survive this grievous disaster, but died about the beginning of the year 605, in the thirty-fourth year of his reign, and seventy-eighth of his age (53).

We know little or nothing of the history of the Pictish princes who flourished in that period which is the

(48) Ogygia, p. 43. Boethius Scot. Hist. l. 8. Buchan l. 5.

(49) *Ibid.*

(50) Ogygia, p. 43. Boethius Scot. Hist. l. 8. Buchan l. 5. Adamnan. Vit. S. Columb. l. i. c. 7.

(51) See Biograph. Britan. v. i. p. 63.

(52) Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. i. c. 34. Chron. Saxon. p. 24.

(53) *Ibid.*



A. D. 600, subject of this section, except their names, and the  
 to 801. length of their reigns, which have been preserved in an  
 ancient chronicle, published by Mr. Innes, in his Critical Essay on the ancient Inhabitants of Scotland (54).

## SECTION II.

*The civil and military history of Great Britain, from A. D.  
 600 to the accession of Egbert, the first English monarch,  
 A. D. 801.*

A. D. 600, AT the beginning of the seventh century, all the  
 to 801. south and east coasts of Britain, from Cornwall to the  
 frith of Forth, were possessed by various tribes of Saxons, Iutes, and Angles, divided into seven petty states or kingdoms, viz. those of Wessex, Sussex, Kent, Essex, East-Anglia, Mercia, and Northumberland. The east coasts of Caledonia, from the frith of Forth to Caithness, were occupied by the Picts, now united into one kingdom; and the north and west coasts of that country, from Caithness to the frith of Clyde, with the adjacent islands, were inhabited by the Scots, now also formed into one monarchy. Almost all the western coasts, from the frith of Clyde to the Land's-end, were still in the possession of the posterity of the ancient Britons, divided into many little principalities, whose numbers, names, and boundaries, were perpetually changing, by the division of the territories of the fathers among their sons, by conquests and other accidents.

State of  
 Britain.

An island inhabited by so many fierce and warlike nations, animated with the most implacable enmity against each other, derived from their ancestors, and every day more and more inflamed by mutual injuries, could not fail to be a scene of much confusion, and of many wars and revolutions. To form these wars and revolutions into one clear, perspicuous, unperplexed narration, is extremely difficult, if not impossible, though it must be attempted.

As all the other six kingdoms of the Anglo-Saxons A. D. 600, fell gradually under the dominion of the West-Saxon to 801. princes (from whom Egbert, the first English monarch, and his successors, were descended), it may not be improper to give our first attention to the history of these princes, and to regulate our introduction of the most memorable events which happened in all the other states of Britain, by the chronology of the West-Saxon kingdom. By this means the thread of our narration will be preserved unbroken, and some degree of unity and order introduced into this most intricate and perplexing period of the history of Britain.

The history of the several British states regulated by the chronology of the West-Saxons.

Upon the death of Ceolwulf king of Wessex, A. D. 611, Cinigefil, his nephew, the son of Ceolric, obtained the government of that kingdom; and soon after assumed his brother Quicelm to be his partner in the throne (1). These two princes, who were justly admired for the warmth and constancy of their fraternal affections, defeated the Britons A. D. 614, at Beamdune, now Bampton, in Devonshire (2).

Cinigefil and Quicelm kings of Wessex.

At the accession of Cinigefil to the government of Wessex, Ethelfred king of Northumberland was the most powerful and enterprising prince among the Anglo-Saxons. Having married Acca, the daughter of Alla king of Deira, he got possession of that kingdom on the death of his father-in-law, A. D. 588, though Alla left an infant-son named *Edwin*, who lived many years in exile, and became afterwards very famous (3). Ethelfred succeeded his father Athelric in the kingdom of Bernicea, A. D. 590, and by that means united the two Northumbrian kingdoms into one. After the great victory which he obtained over Aidan king of Scots, A. D. 603, he had leisure to pursue his ambitious schemes for the enlargement of his dominions, without dreading any interruption from the north. Accordingly he engaged in a long war against the neighbouring British princes; in the course of which he obtained a great victory over Brocmail, king of Powis, near Chester, A. D. 613. Brocmail, before the battle, had persuaded 1250 of the monks of Banchor to accompany his army, and pray for his success, promising them his protection. Ethelfred made his first attack upon these monks, and slew no fewer than

Ethelfred king of Northumberland.

(1) Chron. Saxon. p. 25.

(2) Id. ibid. Hen. Hunt. l. 2. W. M. lmf. c. 2.

(3) W. M. lmf. c. 3.

A. D 600,  
to 501



Edwin re-  
covers the  
kingdom  
of North-  
umber-  
land.

1200 of them ; which struck such terror into the British army, that they fled, after a very feeble resistance (4). By this victory the city of Chester, and the adjacent country, fell under the dominion of the conqueror.

Though Ethelfred was thus successful in his martial enterprises, he was far from being easy in his mind. Prince Edwin, his injured brother-in-law, and lawful heir to one half of his dominions, had escaped all his snares, and was now grown up to man's estate. This prince had been carried in his infancy, by some friends of his family, to the court of Cadvan prince of North Wales, where he was educated ; but an unfortunate quarrel having happened between him and Cadwallon, the eldest son of Cadvan, he was obliged to abandon the territories of that prince (5). After this he wandered for some time from place to place, in continual fear and danger from the machinations of Ethelfred, till at length he found an asylum in the court of Ceorl king of Mercia. Here he continued some years, married Queen-burga, daughter of Ceorl ; and by her had two sons, Os-fred and Eodfred. But not finding himself secure from the power of his unrelenting persecutor, even in the court of his father-in-law, he retired from thence, and put himself into the hands of Redwald king of East-Anglia, who promised him his protection. Redwald was by far the best and greatest prince that ever governed the little kingdom of the East-Angles, and for some time resisted all the threats and promises of Ethelfred. At length, however, these promises became so tempting, and the danger of rejecting them appeared so great, that Redwald's resolution began to fail, and he was on the point of making a sacrifice of his honour to his interest, by delivering up his royal guest into the hands of his enemy. Edwin received a secret intimation of his danger from a faithful friend, who advised him to make his escape : but this unhappy prince, being weary of a wandering life, and not knowing whither to fly, or whom to trust, resolved calmly to wait the event, without betraying any distrust of his protector. This proved a fortunate resolution ; for Redwald having communicated his

(4) Bede Hist. Eccl. l. 1. c. 2.

(5) Vaughan's Dissertation on British Chronol.



thoughts concerning Edwin to his queen, that princefs A. D. 600,  
 painted the infamy of betraying his friend in fuch strong <sup>to 801.</sup>  
 colours, that he changed his mind, and determined to  
 affist him in recovering his kingdom. With this view he  
 raifed an army with all poffible fecrecy and expedition,  
 and marched directly into Northumberland. Ethelfred  
 was greatly aftonifhed at this unexpected attack; but be-  
 ing full of courage, and trufting to his good fortune,  
 which had never yet forfaken him, he collected a fmall  
 army in hafte, with which he met his enemies on the eaft  
 banks of the river Idle. Redwald had drawn up his army  
 in excellent order in three bodies; the firft of which was  
 commanded by his eldeft fon, named *Rainer*, the fecond  
 by himfelf, and the third by Edwin. Ethelfred made a  
 furious attack upon the firft of thefe bodies, and killed  
 its commander with his own hand. Encouraged with  
 this fuccefs, he rafhly rushed upon the fecond divifion;  
 where he was overpowered and flain, and all his army  
 cut in pieces. This victory was fo complete, that Ed-  
 win met with no further refiftance, but took peaceable  
 poffeffion of the whole kingdom of Northumberland,  
 A. D. 617, Ethelfred's feven fons having abandoned  
 their country, and fled into Scotland (6).

Edwin, educated in the fchool of adverfity, proved Edwin  
 one of the beft and greateft of the Anglo-Saxon kings (7). <sup>efcapes an</sup>  
 He eftablifhed the moft perfect police and regular admi- <sup>affassina-</sup>  
 niftration of juftice in his own dominions, and was, <sup>tion.</sup>  
 either through love or fear, refpected, and in fome de-  
 gree obeyed, by all the other princes of the Heptarchy (8).  
 Quicelm, king of the Weft-Saxons, bore this fuperiori-  
 ty of Edwin's with the greateft impatience, and attempt-  
 ed to deftroy him by the moft difhonourable means.  
 He fent one Eumer as his ambaffador to Edwin, A. D.  
 626, with inftructions to kill that prince with a poison-  
 ed dagger, which he carried concealed under his robe.  
 When this pretended ambaffador, but real affaffin, was  
 introduced to an audience of the Northumbrian monarch  
 in his palace at Aldby, on the banks of the river Der-  
 went, he pulled out his dagger in the midft of his ha-  
 rangue, and aimed a violent blow at the king; who was

(6) Chron. Sax. p. 27. Bedæ Hift. Eccl. l. 2. c. 12. Hen.  
 Hunt. l. 2. W. Malmf. c. 3.

(7) This prince was moft probably the founder of the caftle  
 and city of Edinburgh, which was anciently called *Ethwinburgh*.

(8) Bedæ Hift. Ecclef. l. 2. c. 14. W. Malmf. l. 1. c. 3.

A. D. 600, on this occasion preserved from certain death, by the generous heroic affection of Lilla, one of his courtiers, who intercepted the blow with his own body, and fell down dead on the spot. The treacherous murderer was soon dispatched by the guards, though he slew another of the king's servants, named *Frodheri*, in the scuffle (9). Edwin, justly incensed at this base attempt upon his life, marched an army into the territories of the West-Saxons, and took a severe revenge (10).

War between Edwin and Penda King of Mercia.

Edwin had hitherto been successful in all his enterprises, and victorious over all his enemies; but a dangerous and formidable rival now appeared upon the stage. This was Penda, grandson of Creda, who mounted the throne of Mercia A. D. 626. Penda was one of the fiercest and most bloody tyrants that ever disgraced royalty; and though he was fifty years of age when he began his reign, he lived to be the destruction of many excellent princes, and the author of many calamities to his country (11). He slew in battle no fewer than three kings of the East-Angles, Sigbert, Egric, and Annas, who were unhappily his neighbours and contemporaries (12). He invaded the territories of the two brothers, kings of Wessex, and fought a bloody battle against them near Cirencester, which was ended by night, before victory had declared on either side. Next morning, finding that he had sustained a great loss of men in the preceding battle, he consented to make peace with the royal brothers, that he might be at leisure to turn his whole forces against Edwin king of Northumberland, his most powerful rival, and chief object of his malice (13). To secure his success in this enterprise, he entered into an alliance with Cadwallon prince of Wales, who had not yet forgotten his quarrel with Edwin in his youth. These two princes having united their forces, invaded Northumberland with a very great army, and defeated and killed Edwin near Hatfield, on October 12th, A. D. 633 (14). This defeat was exceedingly fatal to the army, the family, and dominions of Edwin; his army being almost entirely cut in pieces in the action; his children either slain in the battle, or driven into exile,

(9) Bede H. st. Eccles. l. 2. c. 9

(11) W. M. lmf. l. 1. c. 3.

(13) Hen. Hunt. l. 2.

(10) Id. ibid.

(12) Id. ibid.

(14) Chron. Saxen. p. 29. and

and his dominions desolated by the ferocious conquerors A. D. 600, to 804  
with fire and sword (15).

After Penda and Cadwallon had returned into their own dominions from that scene of desolation which they had occasioned in the north, Ofric, a cousin of Edwin's, seized the kingdom of Deira; and Eanfred, the eldest son of Ethelfred, returning from Scotland, was acknowledged king of Bernicia (16). But these princes did not long enjoy their dignity, being both killed by Cadwallon in the year 634; a year which was esteemed unfortunate and accursed by the people of Northumberland, even in the days of Venerable Bede, on account of the apostasy and death of these two kings, and the many direful calamities which befel their subjects (17). Cadwallon, who had been the chief author of these calamities, was not much longer allowed to enjoy the cruel delight which he took in destroying his fellow-creatures. For Oswald, the second son of Ethelfred, after the death of his brother, with whom he returned from Scotland, collected a small army of brave and resolute men, who were determined to deliver their country, or perish in the attempt. With this little army he assaulted, defeated, and slew Cadwallon, at a place called *Hefenfield*, now *Benfield*, in Northumberland, A. D. 635 (18). By this great victory, Oswald obtained possession of the whole kingdom of Northumberland, which he soon restored to its former prosperity by his wise and mild administration.

We are not informed in what manner the ever-restless and turbulent Penda, king of Mercia, was employed in this interval. But at length observing that Oswald, king of Northumberland, had arrived at a degree of power and prosperity equal to that of his great predecessor Edwin, his jealousy was awakened, and he resolved on his destruction. To accomplish this he declared war against him, which was carried on for some years with various success. At last a decisive battle was fought on August 5th, A. D. 642, at a place called *Maserfeld*, in which the good king Oswald was defeated and slain, in the thirty-eighth year of his age, and eleventh of his reign (19). Penda, as usual, made a cruel use of his victory; and

(15) Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 2.

(16) Chron. Saxon. p. 30.

(17) Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 3. c. 1.

(18) Id. ibid. c. 2.

(19) Id. ibid. l. 3. c. 9.

A. D. 600, after he had done all the mischief he could in the open country, besieged Bebbanburgh, the capital city of Bernicia. Here he met with an unexpected repulse, which Beda ascribes to the wonder-working prayers of Aidan, bishop of Holy-Island. After Penda had made many assaults without success, he collected an immense quantity of wood and other combustible materials, which he piled up as near the walls as possible; and when he observed the wind bearing strong towards the city, he set fire to the pile, in hopes of burning the town. But when the flames were surmounting the walls, and threatening all within them with destruction, the wind suddenly changed, and blew them with still greater violence on the besiegers, burning some of them to death, and obliging the rest to fly (20). After the death of Oswald, the Northumbrian kingdom was again divided, Oswi his brother succeeding him in Bernicia, and Oswin his cousin in Deira.

Wars between Cenwal king of Wessex, and Penda king of Mercia, &c.

Cinigelil king of Wessex died A. D. 643 (his royal brother Quicelm having died a few years before), and was succeeded by his son Cenwal. This prince, soon after his accession, divorced his queen, who was sister to Penda king of Mercia: an action which drew upon him, as he might have foreseen, the indignation of that powerful and impatient monarch; who invaded his dominions, defeated him in several battles, and at last obliged him to abandon his country, and take shelter in the court of Annas, king of the East-Angles, A. D. 645 (21). When he had remained there about three years in exile, he found an opportunity of recovering his kingdom, which he thenceforward defended with great valour and success, during a long reign of thirty-one years (22). The furious Penda being enraged at Annas for the kind reception he had given to Cenwal in his distress, invaded his territories A. D. 654, killed him in battle, and cut almost his whole army in pieces (23). But heaven was now preparing to take vengeance on this hoary tyrant, and destroyer of so many kings. Though he was connected with Oswi, king of Northumberland, by a double marriage between their children (Alfred, the son of Oswi, being married to Cynburga, the

(20) Bede Hist. Eccles. l. 3. c. 16. (21) Chron. Saxon. p. 32.

(22) Hen. Hunt. l. 2. W. Malah. c. 2. (23) Hen. Hunt. l. 2.

daughter



daughter of Penda, and Peada, the son of Penda, to Alch-  
 feda, the daughter of Oswi), nothing could dissuade A. D. 600,  
to 801.  
 him from invading the territories of that prince. Oswi,  
 remembering that two of his greatest predecessors,  
 Edwin and Oswald, had been slain, and innumerable  
 calamities brought upon his country, by this dreadful  
 adversary, endeavoured to avert the impending storm,  
 by offering the most valuable presents. But all these  
 offers were rejected with disdain, and Penda entered  
 Northumberland at the head of a powerful army, ac-  
 companied by Ethelhirc king of the East-Angles, and  
 Edelwald king of Deira, his allies, or rather vassals;  
 threatening to extirpate the whole inhabitants without  
 exception. Oswi, perceiving that nothing under hea-  
 ven could preserve himself, his family, and subjects,  
 from destruction, but their own activity and courage,  
 collected all his forces, and boldly marched to attack his  
 enemies, though greatly inferior to them in numbers.  
 The two hostile armies met A. D. 655, on the banks of  
 a river, then called *Wenuaid*, now *Broad-Ave*, which  
 runs by Leeds, where a bloody battle was fought; in  
 which the Northumbrians, exerting the most desperate  
 valour, and fighting for their very existence as a nation,  
 obtained a complete victory, killed Penda and Ethelhirc,  
 and about thirty other chieftains, with a prodigious  
 number of their followers (24). By this great victory,  
 Oswi not only preserved his own dominions from ruin,  
 but got possession of the whole kingdom of Mercia; the  
 southern part of which beyond the Trent he voluntarily  
 bestowed upon Peada, the eldest son of Penda, and his  
 own son-in-law. But this prince being slain soon after  
 by treachery, Oswi governed the Mercian territories  
 about three years by his lieutenants; who were then ex-  
 pelled by a combination of the nobles, and Wulphere,  
 the second son of Penda, was by them raised to the throne  
 of Mercia A. D. 659 (25). From this period, Oswi  
 king of Northumberland seems to have lived in perfect  
 peace with Wulphere king of Mercia during his whole  
 reign; and an uncommon degree of tranquillity prevailed  
 over all the kingdoms of the heptarchy for many years  
 after the death of the furious Penda. This affords us  
 a favourable opportunity of taking a very short view of

(24) Bede Hist. Eccles. l. 3. c. 24.

(25) Id. ibid.

A. D. 600, the most important events which happened in other parts of Britain, from the beginning of the seventh century, to the death of Cenwall king of Wexsex, A. D. 672.

**History of Wales.** The history of the Britons of Cornwall, Wales, and Cumbria, is exceedingly obscure in this period. Being under the government of many petty princes or chieftains, they were almost engaged in continual broils and quarrels amongst themselves; which prevented them from giving much disturbance to their common enemies the Saxons. Cadwallon, the contemporary, enemy, and conqueror, of Edwin king of Northumberland, was by far the most powerful of the British princes of those times; and after his death, which happened A. D. 635, the Britons seem to have been quite dispirited, and to have lost all hopes of recovering their country from the Saxons. They fought indeed several battles against Cenwall king of Wexsex at Bradford upon Avon, A. D. 652; and another against the same prince at Pen in Somersetshire, A. D. 658; but they fought with little spirit, and were constantly defeated (26).

**Continued.** Nor is the history of the Scots much more clear and certain in this period than that of the Britons; and that of the Picts is almost quite unknown. This acknowledgment concerning the Scots, will, perhaps, appear surprising and offensive to those who peruse the works of Fordun, Boethius, Buchanan, and other Scots historians, and there find a regular succession of many kings of Scotland in those times, with formal descriptions of their characters, and long details of their actions. But as all these writers are mere moderns, in comparison of the times we are now considering, and seldom condescend to quote their authorities, those who do not yield an implicit faith to all their narrations, ought not to be too severely censured: and a writer who thinks himself obliged to omit some of these narrations, as at best uncertain, will not be greatly blamed by the real friends of truth.

**Continued.** Aidan king of Scots dying A. D. 605, was succeeded by his eldest surviving son Eoach Buydhe, or Eoach the Yellow, so called from the colour of his hair (27). This prince, who is named *Eugenius* by our modern historians, is said to have been a great favourite of the famous

(26) Chron. Saxon. p. 33—39.

(27) See Innes's Essays, Append. No. 4.

St. Columba, who pointed him out to his father Aidan as his successor, at a time when he had three elder sons living (28). Some of our later historians represent Eugenius as a peaceful, others as a warlike prince, continually fighting, either against the Picts or Saxons: a sufficient proof that they knew nothing with certainty of his character or actions (29). The only thing recorded of him with any tolerable evidence is, that he gave a kind reception and hospitable entertainment to the seven sons of Ethelfred king of Northumberland, who fled into Scotland with their sister Ebba, and many followers, A. D. 617 (30).

A. D. 600,  
to 801.

In the two ancient catalogues of the kings of Scots, published by Father Innes, Kinath-Kerr, or Kinath the Left-handed, the son of Conal, is placed immediately after Eoach Buydhe, and is said to have reigned three months: though all our modern historians, for what reason I know not, have inverted this order, and placed the short reign of Kenneth before that of Eugenius (31). However this may be, it is generally agreed, that Ferchar, the eldest son of Eochod, or Eugenius, ascended the throne of Scotland A. D. 622; concerning whom Fordun confesses he knew nothing; though two more modern historians pretend to have discovered, by what means they do not inform us, that he was a very wicked prince; and that being cast into prison by his nobility for his crimes, he there put an end to his own life (32).

Dovenald Breach, or Donald the Speckled, succeeded his brother Ferchar A. D. 632. He is said to have been a good prince, and to have generously assisted the sons of Ethelfred king of Northumberland, in returning into that country, and recovering their paternal dominions (33). He was succeeded A. D. 646, by his nephew Ferchar Fada, or Ferchar the Long (34). Though Fordun, the most ancient of the Scots historians, seems to have known nothing of the character of this prince, two of his successors, Boethius and Buchanan, describe his vices as particularly as if they had been personally acquainted with him, and represent him

(28) Adamnan. Vita Columb. l. 1. c. 8.

(29) Fordun, c. 32. Buchan. l. 5.

(30) Fordun, c. 33. Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 2. c. 12.

(31) Fordun, c. 31. Buchan. l. 5.

(32) Boet. l. 9. Buchan. l. 5.

(33) Fordun, c. 34.

(34) Fordun, c. 37.

A. D. 600, as a monster of impiety, cruelty, and sensuality (35).  
 to 684. What credit is due to this representation, let the reader judge. Upon the death of Ferchar, A. D. 664, Maldwin, his cousin, the son of Dovenald Breach, mounted the throne. In the ancient catalogues of the kings of Scots, the name of this prince is inserted immediately after that of his father, and before that of his cousin Ferchar (36). But Fordun and his followers have changed this order of succession, without giving any reasons for the change. Maldwin is represented by all our historians as a wise and good prince, who governed his own subjects with prudence and justice, and maintained peace with all his neighbours (37). In the fifth year of this king's reign, a most dreadful pestilence raged in all the nations of Europe, except among the Scots and Picts; of which Fordun gives a particular account from Adamnan abbot of Jona, who flourished in those times (38). Maldwin ended his life and reign A. D. 684.

History of  
 the Pict.  
 and a long  
 peace be-  
 tween the  
 Saxons  
 and Scots.

The civil and military history of the Pictish nation (who possessed the eastern and best part of Caledonia), from the beginning of the seventh century to the death of Maldwin king of Scots, is entirely lost, except the names of their kings, which may be seen in the Appendix. Before we take our leave of the north for some time, it may not be improper to take notice, that from the death of Aidan king of Scots A. D. 605, to the death of Maldwin A. D. 684, an uninterrupted peace subsisted between the Scots and Saxons; a thing not very common between two such fierce and warlike neighbours. The reasons of this long cessation of hostilities seem to have been these: The Scots were so much weakened and dispirited by the great loss which they sustained in the fatal battle of Daglastane, A. D. 603, that for a long time they had neither power nor inclination to make any further attempts upon the Saxons; and the Saxons were so much employed in mutual quarrels, that they had no leisure to disturb the Scots. After the return of the family of Ethelfred from Scotland, A. D. 634, where they had been kindly entertained seventeen

(35) Boet. l. 9. Buchan. l. 5.

(36) Ibid. Append. No. 4, 5.

(37) Fordun, l. 3. c. 42.

(38) Ibid.



years, a cordial friendship (strengthened by mutual good offices, and cherished by the means of those Scottish clergy who converted the Northumbrian Saxons to Christianity) took place between the Scots and Saxons, and continued many years.—But it is now time to return to the south, and pursue the civil and military history of the Anglo-Saxons from the death of Cenwall king of Wessex, A. D. 672.

Cenwall having died without issue, the succession to the throne of Wessex remained for some time in an unsettled state. Sexburga, his widow, who was a princess of uncommon spirit and abilities, kept possession of the chief authority to her death, which happened about a year after that of her husband (39). After this, the succession was disputed between Eskwin, a prince of the royal family, and Kentwin, brother to the late king Cenwall, who reigned for about three years over different districts (40). Wulphere king of Mercia, second son of the long redoubted Penda, had an engagement with Eskwin, one of these competitors, at Bedwin in Wiltshire, A. D. 675 (41). Wulphere did not long survive this action, but dying that same year, was succeeded by his brother Ethelred (42); and Eskwin dying the year after, Kentwin, his competitor, became sole monarch of the West-Saxons (43).

At the accession of Kentwin to the throne of Wessex, A. D. 676, the three small kingdoms of Suffex, Effex, and East-Anglia, had fallen into a state of imbecility, and subjection to their powerful neighbours, the kings of Mercia and Wessex. This was occasioned by disputes about the succession in these little states, upon the failure of the male issue of their respective founders, and by various other accidents. A few years after, the kingdom of Kent, the most ancient of the Saxon states in Britain, fell into the same condition, from the same causes. From henceforward, therefore, we shall hear very little of these small dependent states, as few of the events which happened in them are worthy of a place in history.

We shall now pursue the history of the three more powerful and flourishing kingdoms of Wessex, Mercia, and Northumberland, which were at this time governed

History of  
Suffex,  
Effex,  
East-Anglia, and  
Kent.

History of  
Wessex,  
Mercia,  
and Northumberland.

(39) Chron. Saxon. p. 41.

(40) Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 4. c. 12.

(41) Chron. Saxon. p. 41. (42) Id. ibid: (43) Id. p. 44.

A. D. 600, by the three following princes; Kentwin, king of Wessex; Ethelred, the youngest son of Penda, and brother of Wulphere, king of Mercia; Egfrid, son of Oswi, king of Northumberland. These three princes were restless and ambitious, and engaged in almost constant wars.

Kentwin king of Wessex employed his arms chiefly against the Britons of Cornwall and Somersetshire, and over-run those countries, having penetrated as far as the Bristol channel, A. D. 681 (44). Ethelred king of Mercia, who began his reign A. D. 675, made his first efforts against the little kingdom of Kent, which he laid waste (45). After this, he turned his arms against Egfrid king of Northumberland, from whom he recovered Lincolnshire, and against whom he fought a very bloody battle A. D. 679, on the banks of the Trent; in which Elfwin, an amiable young prince, brother to king Egfrid, was slain. A peace was happily brought about between these two monarchs, by the mediation of Theodore archbishop of Canterbury; after which Ethelred spent the remainder of his long reign in a state of tranquillity (46). But Egfrid the Northumbrian monarch did not imitate his example; for no sooner was the pacification between him and Ethelred concluded, than he turned his arms against the Scots and Picts. In the first year of this war, A. D. 684, he gained some advantages against the Scots; but the year following, having ventured too far into the enemy's country, he was defeated and slain, and almost his whole army cut in pieces by the Picts (47). This defeat was very fatal to the kingdom of Northumberland. The fine country between the frith of Forth and the river Tweed, on the east, was over-run by the Picts; and in the West, the Britons of Galloway and Cumberland recovered their liberty and their country; by which the boundaries of the Northumbrian kingdom were very much contracted. The prince who reigned over the Scots when Egfrid invaded them was Eochol Renneval, or the Crooked-nose, called by our late historians *Eugenius* IV. who succeeded his uncle Maldwin A. D. 684, and died A. D. 687 (48). The Pictish king who defeated and slew the Northum-

(44) Chron. Saxon. p. 45.

(45) Id. p. 44.

(46) *Rec. Hist. Eccles.* l. 4. c. 21.

(47) Id. c. 26.

(48) *Fordun*, l. 3. c. 43.

brian monarch was Brude III. who reigned from A. D. 600, 674 to 695 (49). A. D. 600,  
to 801.

Kentwin king of Wesssex dying A. D. 685, was succeeded by Ceodwalla, a prince of the blood-royal, who greatly enlarged his dominions by the entire reduction of the kingdom of Suffex, and made several very destructive inroads into the kingdom of Kent; in one of which he lost his brother Mollo, who was surrounded, and burnt to death, with all his attendants, by the enraged enemy, A. D. 687 (50). The year after this tragical event, Ceodwalla being seized with remorse for the cruelties which he had committed in the course of his wars, took a journey to Rome, where he died soon after his arrival, on April 20, A. D. 689; and was succeeded by his cousin Ina, who proved one of the best and greatest princes of the age in which he lived (51). Aldfrid, a natural brother of Egfrid's, had succeeded that unhappy prince in the kingdom of Northumberland A. D. 685; but being more addicted to letters than to arms, he contented himself with governing his own subjects with wisdom and justice, without disturbing any of his neighbours (52). Ethelred still continued to reign in Mercia; but had conceived an abhorrence of war, and spent the greatest part of his time in acts of devotion. These circumstances were favourable to Ina's design of enlarging his dominions. With this view, and in order to revenge the cruel death of his relation Mollo, he invaded Kent A. D. 694; but was prevailed upon, by a great sum of money, to desist from that enterprize (53). He then turned his arms against the Britons, and obtained a great victory over Gerwint king of Wales, by which he made an entire conquest of Cornwall and Somersetshire, and annexed them to his kingdom (54). While Ina was thus employed, Ethelred king of Mercia, who had lived many years like a monk upon the throne, descended from it A. D. 704, and became a monk in reality, leaving his crown to his nephew Cenred (55). This prince was soon after seized with the fashionable frenzy of those times, abandoned his throne, and went to Rome A. D. 709, in company with another royal vagabond, Offa

Continued.

(49) Innes, v. 1. p. 138.

(51) Chron. Saxon. p. 45, 46. Bede Hist. Eccles. l. 5. c. 7.

(52) Id. ibid. l. 4. c. 26.

(53) Chron. Saxon. p. 48.

(54) Hen. Hunt. l. 4.

(55) Chron. Saxon.

**A. D. 600,** king of the East-Saxons; and there they both embraced the monastic life (56). Aldfrid, the learned king of Northumberland, after a peaceful reign of twenty years, had died at Dryfield in December A. D. 704, and was succeeded by his son Osred, a young prince about eight years of age (57). The Picts, after the great victory which they obtained over Egfrid, had made several incursions into Northumberland. In one of these, A. D. 699, they defeated and killed one Berht, a Northumbrian nobleman (58). But they were not so successful in another invasion A. D. 711; for being encountered by Berectfrid, regent of the kingdom in the minority of Osred, they were defeated, and so great a number of them slain, that it in some measure revenged the death of Egfrid and Berht (59). Ceolred, the son of Ethelred, who succeeded his cousin Cenred in the throne of Mercia, was not of so monkish a disposition as his two predecessors; but being jealous of the increasing power of Ina king of Wessex, he declared war against him. In the course of this war, a very bloody battle was fought A. D. 715, at Wodnesbeorth, in which neither party had any reason to boast of victory, and both suffered so much, that it put an end to all further hostilities (60). Ceolred did not long survive this battle; but dying A. D. 716, was succeeded by Ethelbald, who was next heir to the crown. The same year proved fatal to Osred, the young king of Northumberland, who was then slain, though we are not informed in what manner, or by whom (61). Cenred, a prince of the blood-royal, seized the crown; of which he kept possession only two years, and was then succeeded by Osric, the second son of Aldfrid; who performed nothing memorable; but dying A. D. 726, left his kingdom to Ceolwulf, who was brother to his predecessor Cenred, and patron to the venerable historian Bede (62).

England  
enjoyed  
peace for  
some years.

England at this period enjoyed an uncommon degree of tranquillity for several years. This seems to have been owing to the unsettled state of the Northumbrian kingdom; to the libidinous disposition of Ethelbald king

(56) Chron. Saxon. p. 50. Bede Hist. Eccles. l. 5. c. 19.

(57) Id. ibid. l. 5. c. 18.

(58) Chron. Saxon. p. 49.

(59) Id. p. 50. Hen. Hunt. l. 4.

(60) Id. ibid. Chron. Saxon. p. 51.

(61) Bede Hist. Eccles. l. 5. c. 24.

(62) Id. l. 5. c. 25.



of Mercia, which engaged him in other pursuits than <sup>A. D. 600,</sup> those of ambition; and to the great change which age <sup>to 801.</sup> had produced in Ina king of Wessex, who spent the last years of his reign in the beneficent works of peace; and at last retired to Rome A. D. 728 (with his queen Ethelburga) and there ended his days in a monastery (63).—Here it may not be improper to take a very short view of the chief things which had been lately transacted in the other parts of Britain.

The unhappy Britons, who had been deprived of the most valuable part of their country by the Saxons, <sup>History of Wales.</sup> still continued to suffer new losses, and to be confined within narrower and narrower bounds. By the West-Saxon kings, Kentwin and Ina, they were deprived of all the country on the south side of the Bristol channel; and by the Northumbrian princes, those of Cumberland and Galloway were reduced to a state of great subjection. From this indeed these last obtained a temporary relief by the defeat and death of Egfrid, and the misfortunes which thereby came upon the kingdom of Northumberland: but this relief was not of very long duration, as we shall presently observe. The most powerful prince among the Britons, in the end of the seventh and beginning of the eighth century, was named *Geraint*, the same who was defeated by Ina king of Wessex A. D. 710 (64). After the death of this prince, A. D. 720, Roderic Malwynoc, a descendant of the famous Cadwallon, was the most considerable of the British princes, and is said (by the Welsh historians) to have fought many battles, with various success, against the kings of Wessex and Mercia, who were his contemporaries (65).

Eochol Renneval, or Eugenius IV. king of Scots, <sup>History of Scotland.</sup> dying A. D. 687, was succeeded by Ewen, or Eugenius V. son of Ferchar the Long. On this occasion the modern Scotch historians have again departed from the order of succession in the most ancient catalogues of the kings of Scots, in which Arnochellac, or Arnkelleth, is introduced before Ewen (66). However this may be, it is agreed, that these two princes reigned from A. D. 687 to A. D. 698, and had several skirmishes, but no decisive

(63) W. Malmf. l. i. c. 2.

(64) Chron. Saxon. p. 50.

(65) Powel's Hist. Wales, p. 15.

(66) Innes, Append. No. 4, 5.

A. D. 600, battle, with their neighbours the Picts (67). On the death of his immediate predecessor Heatagan, the son of Findan, called Eugenius VI. became king of Scots, and put an end to all disputes with the Picts for some time, by marrying Spondana, daughter to their king (68). Fordun, the most ancient of the Scotch historians, gives an excellent character of this prince; and seems to have known nothing of the strange improbable tale, of his having been tried by his nobles for the murder of his queen, which is so formally related by more modern writers (69). Murdoch, the son of Armkelleth, succeeded his uncle Heatagan A. D. 715, and reigned fifteen years in the most profound peace (70).

An universal peace in Britain.

The former part of the eighth century appears to have been the most peaceful period of the ancient history of Britain since the arrival of the Saxons. At that time the long and violent storms which had agitated all the nations inhabiting this island, for several ages, with very little intermission, subsided into an universal calm, which is thus described by the venerable historian Bede, in the conclusion of his most valuable work: "At this time the Picts are in a state of friendship with the English, and of conformity with the universal church in truth and peace. The Scots too, contented with their own territories, are forming no plots against the English. Nay, even the Britons themselves, though animated with hereditary hatred against the English, and at variance with the Catholic church about the time of keeping Easter, finding themselves baffled both in their civil and religious contests, have sunk into a state of tranquillity, some under their own princes, and some under the dominion of the English. This is the present state of all the nations of Britain in this year 731. What will be the consequence of this tranquillity, which hath made so many, both of the nobility and common people, in this kingdom of Northumberland, abandon the use of arms, and crowd into monasteries, time alone can discover (71)." — With extreme regret, we must here take our leave of this venerable historian, who hath hitherto been our

(67) Fordun. l. 3. c. 43, 44.

(68) Id. c. 45.

(69) Scot. Hist. Scot. l. 9. Buchan. Scot. Hist. l. 5.

(70) Fordun. l. 3. c. 45.

(71) Bede Hist. Eccles. l. 5. c. 23.

chief companion and guide through the intricate mazes of the Anglo-Saxon history.—But it is now time to turn our attention towards the south.

A. D. 600,  
to 801.

Ina, king of the West-Saxons, at his departure for Rome, A. D. 729, left his throne and kingdom to Ethelhard, brother to his queen Ethelburga, and a prince of the royal family; who having defeated Oswald, another prince of the blood, and pretender to the crown, reigned in profound peace to the time of his death A. D. 741 (72). Ceolwlf king of Northumberland had in the mean time resigned his crown, and retired into the monastery of Lindesfarne, A. D. 737, and was succeeded by his cousin Eadbert, the last king of the Northumbrians who made any considerable figure (73). He defended the southern frontiers of his kingdom against some attempts of Ethelbald king of Mercia, with spirit and success, and reduced the Strath-Cluyd Britons to their former subjection (74). This great prince, after having triumphed over all his enemies, and gained the love and admiration of his subjects, was unfortunately seized with the epidemic madness of those times, resigned his crown to his son Ofulf, and retired into a monastery, A. D. 758; where he lived to see the ruin which this unwarrantable step brought upon his family and country (75). Cuthred, who succeeded Ethelhard in the throne of Wessex, had an unquiet reign, being almost continually engaged in war, either against Ethelbald king of Mercia, or, in conjunction with that prince, against the Britons (76). In the ninth year of his reign, his son Cenric, a young prince of great courage, was slain in a military tumult. About a year after this great misfortune, he defeated, and generously pardoned, Ethelhun, a nobleman of an ambitious and undaunted spirit, who had raised a rebellion; and it was not long before he reaped the reward of his generosity. For his great rival Ethelbald, having collected all his forces, in order to decide their quarrel by one great blow, the two monarchs met, at the head of two great armies, A. D. 752, at Burford, where a long and bloody battle was fought, in which Cuthred obtained the victory, chiefly

History of  
Wessex,  
Mercia,  
and North-  
umberland.

(72) Chron. Saxon. p. 53. 55.

(73) Sim. Dunelm. c. 16.

(74) Id. c. 18. Continuatio Bedæ.

(75) Sim. Dunelm. c. 18.

(76) W. Malmf. l. i. c. 1. Hen. Hunt. l. 4.

A. D. 600, by the prodigies of valour performed by the grateful Ethelhun. This nobleman, after killing great numbers of the Mercian foldiers, encountered Ethelbald, and obliged him to fly, in which he was soon followed by his whole army (77). Cuthred did not very long survive this victory, and another which he obtained over the Britons; but dying A. D. 754, was succeeded by his cousin Segebert; who by his folly, pride, and cruelty, soon forfeited the esteem, and incurred the hatred of his subjects; who, A. D. 755, rebelled against him, and drove him from his throne and country. The worthless and wretched Segebert, being forsaken by all the world, took shelter in the great forest of Anderida; where he was discovered, and put to death by a swine-herd (78). Cynewlf, a prince of the royal family, who had headed the insurrection against Segebert, succeeded him in the throne of Wessex (79). About the same time, Ethelbald, king of Mercia, after a long reign of forty-one years, was killed in battle at Seckington in Warwickshire (80). Beornred, who succeeded him, appears to have been an usurper, and probably a commander of the army which defeated and slew him. If this was really the case, he had no great reason to rejoice in the success of his ambitious schemes; for before the end of the year 755, he was dethroned, and expelled, by a general insurrection of the nobility and people of Mercia, under the command of Offa, a brave young prince of the royal family, who was by universal consent raised to the throne (81).

Continued. Offa was by far the greatest and most powerful prince that ever filled the throne of Mercia, and raised that kingdom to a degree of greatness and prosperity, which seemed to threaten all the other kingdoms of the heptarchy with subjection. His first attempt was against the kingdom of Northumberland, from which he dismembered the county of Nottingham, and annexed it to his own dominions (82). The kings of Kent had for a considerable time been in a state of dependence, sometimes on the kings of Wessex, and sometimes on those of Mercia. Offa invaded that little kingdom A. D. 774; and having obtained a great victory at Otford, reduced it to

(77) Hen. Hunt. l. 4. (78) Id. *ibid.* Chron. Saxon. p. 56.

(79) Id. *ibid.*

(80) Chron. Saxon. p. 59.

(81) Id. *ibid.* W. Malmf. l. i. c. 4. Ingulph. Hist. Croy. l. 4.

(82) Brompton, p. 776.



a state of subjection to his authority (83). Cynewlf king of Wessex observing these successes of his most powerful rival with a jealous eye, raised a great army with a design to obstruct his progress; but was defeated by Offa at Bensington in Oxfordshire, A. D. 775 (84). After this victory, Offa enlarged his dominions on that side, by the reduction of the counties of Oxford and Gloucester, which had long made a part of the kingdom of Wessex. The Britons seem to have taken advantage of this war between the two greatest of the Anglo-Saxon princes, and made incursions into both their territories; which brought about a peace between them, and the union of their arms against their common enemy. The unhappy Britons, unable to resist two such powerful adversaries, were every where defeated, and obliged to take shelter among the mountains of Wales, abandoning all the low countries to the conquerors (85). To secure his acquisitions on that side, Offa commanded a broad and deep ditch to be made from the mouth of the river Wye on the south, to the river Dee in Flintshire on the north; of which some vestiges are still visible (86). Cynewlf king of Wessex, after he had reigned twenty-nine years, was surprised and slain, A. D. 784, by Cyneheard, a pretender to his crown, at Merton in Surry, whither he had gone with a few attendants to pay a private visit to a lady. But Cyneheard (who was brother to the wicked and unfortunate Segebert) did not reap that advantage from this achievement which he expected; for the nobility and people of the country having heard of the slaughter of their king, flew to arms, and cut him and all his followers in pieces (87). Upon this Brihtric, a prince of the royal family, mounted the throne of Wessex; though Egbert, descended from Ingeld, brother to king Ina, had a preferable title (88).

The kingdom of Northumberland, which in the reign of Eadbert had been the largest and most flourishing state in Britain, after the retreat of that prince from the world became a scene of incessant broils, and frequent revolu-

A. D. 600,  
to 801.

History of  
Northum-  
berland.

(83) Brompton, p. 776. Hen. Hunt. l. 4.

(84) Hen. Hunt. l. 4. Chron. Saxon. p. 61.

(85) Hen. Hunt. l. 4. Powel's Hist. Wales, p. 19.

(86) Id. ibid. Speed's Chron. p. 344.

(87) Chron. Saxon. p. 57. 63.

(88) W. Malm. l. 1. c. 2. l. 2. c. 1.

A. D. 600,  
to 801.

tions, which at length ended in a total anarchy and confusion. Ofulf, the son and successor of Eadbert, was killed by his own domestics, July 4, A. D. 759; and Ethelwold, the son of Moll, a nobleman who seems not to have been related to the royal family, advanced to the throne by the favour of the people (89). Ofwin, a prince of the blood, attempted to pull him down from this elevation, but was defeated and slain at Eldem near Melrofs; though Ethelwold was, not long after, A. D. 765, obliged to resign his crown in favour of Alchred, the son of Ofulf; who was in his turn expelled, A. D. 774, by Ethelred, the son of Ethelwold (90). This usurper did not long enjoy his precarious dignity, being driven out, A. D. 779, by Elfwold, the brother of Alchred (91). The just title, and many virtues of this prince, could not preserve him from the fate of his predecessors; for he was barbarously murdered A. D. 788, by one of his own generals, and succeeded by his nephew Ofred, the son of Alchred (92). Ofred had hardly been seated one year in this tottering throne, when he was pulled down and thrust into a monastery by the nobility, who recalled Ethelred, who had been expelled about ten years before (93). Ethelred took every possible precaution to preserve himself from a second expulsion. He put to death Eardulf, a powerful nobleman, whose designs he suspected; and having got the two young princes, Elf and Elfwene, the sons of the late king Elfwold, into his hands, he murdered them both (94). Ofred also, his predecessor, being taken prisoner in an attempt he made to recover his crown, shared the same fate (95). Still further to secure himself against all his enemies, he married Elsfeda, daughter of Offa, the powerful king of Mercia. But all these precautions proved in vain: for he was murdered by his own subjects about four years after his restoration, A. D. 794 (96). So long a succession of sudden and sanguinary revolutions (of which there is hardly a parallel to be found in history) struck terror into the boldest and most ambitious hearts, and deterred

(89) Sim. Dunelm. c. 19. Chron. Saxon. p. 59.

(90) Id. p. 60, 61.

(91) Id. p. 60. Chron. de Melrofs. ad A. 778.

(92) Chron. de Melrofs. ad An. 788. (93) Id. ad An. 789.

(94) Id. ibid.

(95) Id. ibid.

(96) Id. ibid.

them from aspiring to such a dangerous dignity. This A. D. 600,  
occasioned, if we may believe William of Malmſbury, to 801.  
a total diſſolution of government in Northumberland for  
more than thirty years; which rendered the people of  
that country unhappy at home, and odious and contemp-  
tible among other nations (97). “ Charles the Great  
“ (ſays Alcwiniſ, in a letter preſerved by Malmſbury)  
“ is ſo enraged againſt the people of Northumberland,  
“ that he calls them a perfidious and perverſe people,  
“ the murderers of their own princes, and worſe than  
“ heathens; and if I, who am a native of that country,  
“ had not interceded for them, he would have done  
“ them all the miſchief in his power (98).”

Offa king of Mercia, not contented with all the ad- Wicked  
ditions which he had made to his dominions by the action of  
force of arms, increaſed them ſtill further, by an act of Offa, king  
the moſt horrid treachery and cruelty, towards the of Mercia.  
concluſion of his reign, A. D. 792. Though the kings  
of the Eaſt-Angles, who had never been powerful, had  
long been in a ſtate of dependence on the Mercian mo-  
narchs; yet they ſtill continued to enjoy the title, and  
many of the prerogatives of royalty. Ethelred, who at  
this time governed that ſmall ſtate, was a young prince  
of the moſt amiable perſon and character, beloved by  
his ſubjects, and eſteemed by all the world. By the  
advice of his council, he made propoſals of marriage to  
Althrida, daughter of Offa; which were favourably  
received, and he was invited to the court of Mercia to  
conclude the match. When he arrived there, attended  
by the chief nobility of his kingdom, he was baſely  
murdered, and his dominions annexed to thoſe of Mer-  
cia (99). Offa did not long ſurvive this inhuman deed,  
for which he endeavoured to make ſome atonement by  
an expenſive journey to Rome, and many liberal dona-  
tions to the church. He died A. D. 794, and was ſuc-  
ceeded by his ſon Egfrith; who died in leſs than five  
months after his father (100). This made room for  
Kenwif, a prince of the royal family, who is greatly  
celebrated by our monkish hiſtorians for his valour and  
religion. He was the laſt of the kings of Mercia who  
made a conſiderable figure. For after his death, which

(97) W. Malmf. l. c. 1. 3.

(98) Id. ibid.

(99) Chron. Saxon. p. 65. W. Malmf. l. 1. c. 4.

(100) W. Malmf. l. 1. c. 5.

A. D. 600, happened A. D. 819, that kingdom became a scene of almost annual revolutions, which soon brought on its ruin (101).

History of  
Wessex.

Brihtric, who became king of Wessex on the murder of Cynewlf, A. D. 784, being conscious that his title was disputable, took every precaution he could think of to secure the possession of his throne. With this view he married Eadburga, daughter to Ofa king of Mercia, who was by far the most powerful prince in Britain in those times (102). With the same view, he endeavoured, by various means, to get Egbert, his dangerous competitor, into his hands; which obliged that young prince to abandon his country, and take shelter in the court of Charles the Great; by whom he was kindly received and effectually protected. In the court and armies of that renowned prince, Egbert acquired those accomplishments which laid the foundation of his future greatness, and rendered him the greatest politician and general of the age in which he lived (103). Brihtric was very unhappy in his marriage with Eadburga, who was wanton, cruel, and perfidious, and stuck at nothing to accomplish the destruction of those who had incurred her displeasure. Amongst others she had conceived an implacable animosity against a young nobleman (who was a favourite of her husband), and resolved upon his death. For this purpose, she prepared a cup of poison; of which Brihtric having inadvertently tasted, lost his life, at the same time, and by the same means, with his favourite, A. D. 800 (104). Upon this event the nobility of Wessex recalled Egbert from his exile, and placed him, amidst the joyful acclamations of the people on the throne of his ancestors; which he filled with great dignity thirty-six years, and became the first monarch of the English nation, by those steps which we shall trace in the beginning of the next section.—In the mean time it may be proper to bring down the history of Wales and North-Britain, from where we left it, to this period.

(101) W. Malm. l. 1. c. 5. (102) Chron. Saxon. p. 64.

(103) W. Malm. l. 2. c. 1.

(104) R. Hoveden Ann. pars prior.



The Britons to the south of the Bristol channel had been in a kind of subjection to the West-Saxon kings, from about the beginning of the eighth century, though their own chieftains still retained some degree of authority, till they were reduced to the condition of subjects by Egbert. Those who lived between the Bristol channel and the river Dee were expelled from the low countries, by Offa king of Mercia, and confined to the mountains of Wales; where they were governed by several petty princes, who, according to the custom of those times, were honoured with the title of kings (105). The most considerable of these princes were Caradoc king of North Wales, and Conan Tendaethwy king of South Wales, who flourished in the eighth century (106). The Cumbrian and Strathclyd Britons, who lived along the west coasts, from the river Dee to the frith of Clyde, were in subjection to the Northumbrian princes during the flourishing state of that kingdom; and upon its decline, they recovered their liberty; which they did not long enjoy, the one half of them being reduced to the same state of subjection by the Scots and Picts, and the other half by Egbert (107).

A. D. 600,  
to 801.History of  
Wales.

Before we leave the south, it may be necessary to take notice, that the south and east coasts of Britain began to be infested by new and strange enemies towards the end of the eighth century. These were the Norwegian and Danish pirates, who made a very distinguished figure in the history of Europe for more than two centuries. The first appearance of these ferocious and destructive rovers was on the coast of Wessex, A. D. 787, where they murdered one of the king's officers, who went amongst them without fear or suspicion, to inquire who they were, and whence they came (108). About six years after, another crew of these pirates (for as yet they deserved no other name) landed on the coast of Northumberland, killed many of the inhabitants, and plundered the famous monastery of Lindesfarne, or Holy-Island (109). The very next year, another fleet of these rovers appeared upon the same coasts, and plundered the monastery of Weremouth; but a storm arising,

First appearance  
of the  
Danes, on  
the coasts  
of Britain.

(105) Powell's Hist. Wales, p. 19, 20.

(106) Id. *ibid*.

(107) Innes, v. 1. p. 161.

(108) Chron. Saxon. p. 64. Hen. Hunt. l. 4.

(109) Id. *ibid*.

A. D. 600, several of their ships were wrecked, many of themselves drowned, and a considerable number of them taken prisoners, and beheaded on the shore, by the country-people (110). This disaster deterred them for some time from making any attempts upon the British coasts.

History of Scotland. On the death of Murdoch king of Scots, A. D. 730, his son Ewen mounted the throne, and reigned three years, according to the two most ancient catalogues of the kings of Scotland (111). But our later historians change the order of succession, and introduce Ethsine, or Eth the White, immediately after Murdoch. They differ too from the catalogues concerning the father of Ethsine, who, according to them, was Heatagan, or Eugene VI. who died A. D. 715; but, according to the catalogues, Eochol Crooked-nose, or Eugene IV. who died A. D. 687 (112). But in whatever order these two princes reigned, we know very little with certainty of their transactions. Fergus, the son of Ethsine, mounted the throne of Scotland A. D. 763; but being a profligate and libidinous prince, he was murdered by his queen, in a fit of jealousy, in the third year of his reign (113). Oengus king of the Picts, who reigned over that nation from A. D. 730 to A. D. 761, is represented, by the anonymous continuator of Bede's history, to have been a cruel and sanguinary tyrant, from the beginning to the end of his reign (114). Selvac, the son of Ewen, succeeded Fergus II. in the throne of Scotland A. D. 766. What credit is due to the story told by Boerhius and Buchanan, concerning a rebellion raised against this prince by one Donald Bane, who, assuming the title of *King of the Isles*, invaded the continent of Scotland, where he was defeated and slain, it is difficult to determine (115). Selvac dying A. D. 787, was succeeded by Eochol, the son of Ethsine, who is named *Acchius* by the later Scotch historians. From the fall of the Roman empire to this period, the British princes seem to have had little or no connection or intercourse with those on the continent. But Charlemagne king of France having, by his great policy and many victories, revived the Western empire, began to form alliances with foreign princes, and particularly

(110) Chron. Saxon. p. 64. Hen. Hunt. l. 4.

(111) Jones, Append. No. 4, 5.

(112) Id. ibid. Fordun, l. 3. c. 46.

(113) Fordun, l. 3. c. 45.

(114) Bede Hist. Eccles. p. 224.

(115) Boet. l. 9. Buchan. l. 5.

with some of the British kings. That this illustrious prince A. D. 600, kept up a friendly correspondence, and entered into a treaty of alliance and commerce, with Offa king of Mercia, we have the most undoubted evidence (116). It is also certain, that there subsisted a friendly intercourse, by letters and messengers between that great prince and the kings of Scots, his cotemporaries; but whether that intercourse amounted to a formal alliance, as some French and Scotch historians have affirmed (117), may be justly doubted. Achaius married Ferguliana, sister to Hungus king of the Picts; by whom he had a son, named *Alpine*, who became heir to the Pictish crown, on the failure of the male line of that royal family (118). Though Achaius survived the period of this section, it may not be improper to mention his death, which happened in the thirty second year of his reign, A. D. 819.

Though the Pictish monarchy appears to have been in a flourishing state in the latter part of the eighth century, the particulars of its history which have been preserved are so few, that they cannot be formed into any thing like a continued narration.

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### SECTION III.

*The civil and military history of Great Britain, from the accession of Egbert, the first monarch of England, A. D. 801, to the accession of Edward the Elder, A. D. 901.*

THOUGH Brihtric king of Wessex died A. D. 800, it was not till the year after that his successor Egbert arrived from the continent, and took possession of the vacant throne. At that period all the other kingdoms of the Heptarchy were in a dependent or unsettled state. The little kingdom of Sussex had been some time before annexed to Wessex, and that of the East-Angles to Mercia; and the petty kings of Kent and Essex were

A. D. 801,  
to 901.


State of  
England  
at the ac-  
cession of  
Egbert,  
and the  
conquests  
of that  
prince.

(116) W. Malsm. l. 1. c. 4.

(117) See Fordun, l. 3. c. 48. Buchan. l. 5. Mezeay Hist. Franc. l. 9. p. 412. Eginhard Vit. Car. Mag. l. 16. p. 79.

(118) Boet. l. 10.

A. D. 801,  
to 901.



tributaries to the Mercian monarchs. The two remaining kingdoms of Mercia and Northumberland, though naturally powerful, were greatly weakened by the unsettled state of their government, and contests about the succession. These circumstances afforded Egbert, who was a wise and valiant prince, at the head of an united people, a very fair prospect of enlarging his dominions, and extending his authority. This prince, however, spent the first years of his reign in gaining the affections, by promoting the prosperity, of his subjects, and in reducing the British chieftains of Devon and Cornwall to an entire subjection to his government (1). Nor was he at last the aggressor in those wars which terminated in the reduction of all the kingdoms of the Heptarchy to his obedience. For Bernulf, who had usurped the throne of Mercia, envying his prosperity, and dreading his power, invaded Wessex with all his forces, A. D. 823. Egbert meeting this bold invader at Ellendun (now Wilton,) defeated him with such prodigious slaughter, that the river is said to have been discoloured with the blood, and choaked up with the carcases of the Mercians who fell in that battle (2). This victory was so decisive, that Egbert met with little further opposition in the conquest of Mercia and its dependencies. The two tributary kingdoms of Kent and Essex submitted, without much resistance, to his son Ethelwolf, who marched into those parts at the head of a detachment; and the East-Angles, throwing off the Mercian yoke, which they had borne for some time with great impatience, put themselves under the protection of Egbert. This revolt of the East-Angles completed the ruin of the Mercian affairs, as both Bernulf, and his successor Ludecan, kings of Mercia, lost their lives in attempting to reduce them (3). Wiglaf, who succeeded Ludecan, was soon obliged to abandon his throne, and conceal himself in a cell at Croyland abbey, to prevent his falling into the hands of the conqueror (4). Upon the retreat of this prince, all opposition ceased, and Egbert beheld himself sole monarch of all England to the south of the Humber, about four years after the commencement of the war.

Establishment of the English monarchy.

Though this surprising success probably exceeded the expectations, it did not satisfy the ambition, of Egbert,

(1) Chron. Saxon. p. 69.

(2) Id. p. 70. Hen. Hunt. l. 4.

(3) Hen. Hunt. l. 4.

(4) Ingulf. Hist.

who



who passed the Humber with his army, in order to add A. D. 801, to 901.  
 the kingdom of Northumberland to his other conquests. This kingdom was at that time in such an unsettled and distracted state, that it was in no condition to resist so powerful an invader; and therefore its chief nobility met him at Dore in Yorkshire, made their submission, and acknowledged him for their sovereign (5). Thus was the reduction of all the kingdoms of the Heptarchy under one monarch completed A. D. 827, about three hundred and seventy-eight years after the first arrival of the Saxons in this island (6).

Egbert possessed the art of securing, as well as of making conquests. That he might not too much exasperate the Mercians, who were a numerous and powerful people, by taking from them at once every shadow of their former independency, he restored their late sovereign Wiglaf to the title of king; but obliged him to pay tribute, and hold his kingdom of him as his superior lord (7). This moderation seems to have been very pleasing, both to the Mercians and their prince, as we hear of no attempts they made to shake off a yoke which was made so easy.

Egbert, observing his own hereditary kingdom, and all his late acquisitions, in a state of tranquillity, began to think of new conquests. With this view, he marched his army into North Wales, over-ran the whole country as far as Snowdon, and would probably have added it to his other dominions, if he had not been called away to encounter more formidable enemies (8). These were the Danes; who, after a recess of more than forty years, began again to infest the coasts of Britain, A. D. 832, when they plundered the isle of Shepey. The very next year they returned, with no fewer than thirty-five ships, and landed at Charmouth in Dorsetshire; near to which place a battle was fought between them and the English, with great slaughter on both sides, but without much reason to boast of victory on either (9). About two years after, these teasing plunderers came again with a still greater fleet and army; and landing in Cornwall, prevailed upon the Britons of that country to revolt, and join them. Egbert, not dismayed at this junction, en-

Wiglaf  
 King of  
 Mercia re-  
 stored, and  
 made tri-  
 butary by  
 Egbert.

Egbert's  
 wars with  
 the Welsh  
 and Danes.

(5) Chron. Saxon. p. 71.

(6) W. Malms. l. 2. c. 1. Hen. Hunt. l. 4.

(7) Chron. Saxon. p. 72. Ingulf. Hist.

(8) Chron. Saxon. p. 72. Hen. Hunt. l. 4.

(9) Id. ibid.

A. D. 801, gaged and defeated the combined army of the Danes and Britons, at Hengsdow-hill, with prodigious slaughter. This was the last glorious action of the life of that great prince, and first English monarch, who died A. D. 836 (10).

Accession  
and wars  
of Ethel-  
wolf.

Egbert was succeeded by his son Ethelwolf; who, in the very first year of his reign, gave the government of Kent, Suffex, and Essex, to his eldest son Athelstan, with the title of king (11). The unwelcome visits of the Danes now became annual, or even more frequent; and the history of England for several years consists of nothing but dry details of the descents of these destructive rovers on different parts of the coasts, and of their battles with the inhabitants. The most considerable of these battles was that which was fought at Okeley in Surrey, A. D. 851, between Ethelwolf, assisted by his son Ethelbald, and a great army of Danes, who had landed from a fleet of 350 sail, at the mouth of the river Thames, and had taken and plundered the cities of Canterbury and London in their march. In this action, which is said to have been the bloodiest that ever had been fought in England, the English obtained a great victory (12). But notwithstanding this, and two other victories which they obtained that same year, one by land at Wanbury in Dorsetshire, the other by sea near Sandwich, a party of Danes took possession of the isle of Thanet, where they continued several years, which was the first attempt they made to settle in England (13). The people of North Wales, observing how much the English were harassed by the frequent depredations of the Danes, and imagining that this was a favourable opportunity for revenging the injuries which they had received from Egbert, invaded Mercia, A. D. 853, with a very numerous army; which obliged Burtred, the tributary king of that country, to implore the assistance of Ethelwolf, who was his father-in-law, as well as his sovereign lord. Upon this Ethelwolf marched an army into Mercia, expelled the Welsh, and pursued them into their own country (14).

Ethel-  
wolf's  
journey to  
Rome, re-  
turn, and  
death.

This was the last military exploit of Ethelwolf; who, the year after, took a journey to Rome, where he spent about ten months in the superstitious devotions of those

(10) Chron. Saxon. p. 74. (11) Id. ibid. (12) Hen. Hunt. l. 5.  
(13) Id. ibid. Chron. Saxon. p. 76. (14) Id. ibid.

times, and in acts of liberality to the pope and clergy; which made him a very welcome guest, and procured him all the frivolous unexpensive honours his heart could wish; and amongst others the papal unction of his youngest son Alfred, who was with him in that city (15). In his return to England, through France, he married the princess Judith, daughter to Charles the Bald. On his arrival in his own dominions, he met with a very unexpected difficulty. His eldest surviving son Ethelbald, having his impatient ambition encouraged by some evil counsellors, had resolved to prevent his father's resuming the reins of government, and had formed a very powerful party to assist him in executing that resolution. But this unnatural quarrel was happily terminated without blood, by the moderation of Ethelwolf, who consented that his son should retain the kingdom of Wessex, and contented himself with his other dominions for the remainder of his life, which was only two years (16).

A. D. 801,  
to 901.

Ethelwolf, at his death, A. D. 857, left four sons, named *Ethelbald*, *Ethelbert*, *Ethered*, and *Alfred*. By his will he divided his dominions between the two eldest, assigning the western parts, as most honourable, to Ethelbald, and the eastern to Ethelbert (17). The first of these was a very profligate prince, and gave great scandal by marrying his father's widow (18). At his death, which happened A. D. 860, his brother Ethelbert succeeded to his dominions, and thereby became the sovereign of all England. His reign was also short; and during the course of it the coasts were incessantly infested by the Danes. He was succeeded, A. D. 865, by his next brother Ethered; who, though a good prince, and assisted by his heroic brother Alfred, hardly enjoyed one moment's tranquillity during his whole reign. The Danes, no longer contented with making desultory descents upon the coasts, came over in great multitudes, under more honourable leaders, penetrated further into the country, and attempted to make conquests. A great army of these adventurers landed A. D. 866, among the East-Angles; who, to preserve themselves from immediate destruction, gave them winter-quarters, and fur-

The wars  
of Ethel-  
bald,  
Ethelbert,  
and Ether-  
ed.

(15) Afferius Vit. Alfredi, p. 2.

(16) Id. ibid. W. Malm. l. 2. c. 2. (17) Afferius, p. 2.

(18) Id. ibid.

A. D. 801, <sup>to 901.</sup> nished them with a great number of horses in the spring (19). Thus provided, they directed their march northward, passed the Humber, and took the city of York. The Northumbrians at this time were engaged in a civil war, between two competitors for the government, Osbriht and Ælla, who had the wisdom to suspend their hostilities, and unite their forces against the common enemy; but were both killed in an attempt to recover York (20). Next year the Danish army leaving York, penetrated into Mercia, and seized Nottingham, where they wintered. Burthred, the tributary king of Mercia, unable to expel these invaders, implored the assistance of Ethered; who marching, with his brother Alfred, at the head of a great army, invested the Danes in Nottingham, and partly, by force, and partly by treaty, obliged them to evacuate that place, and return into the north (21). Having rested almost a whole year at York, they again left that city A. D. 870, marched through part of Mercia, marking their way with blood and ruin, entered the country of the East-Angles, and took up their winter quarters at Thetford (22). The East-Angles, finding that all their former submissions could not preserve them from ruin, flew to arms, and being commanded by Edmund, a young prince of distinguished piety and virtue, attacked the Danes; but were totally defeated, and their prince taken and put to death (23). The Danes, encouraged by these successes, advanced to Reading, which they fortified, and made their headquarters; and threatened the whole country around with destruction. Ethered, in order to deliver his kingdom from those dreadful enemies, who had so long preyed upon its vitals, collected all his forces, and summoned the Mercians and Northumbrians to join him with theirs. But these infatuated nations, taking advantage of his distress to recover their independency, refused to comply with this summons, by which they weakened the hands of their sovereign, and brought ruin upon themselves (24). Not dispirited with this most unseasonable defection, Ethered marched at the head of his native subjects, to dislodge the Danes; and in the course of one

(19) Chron Saxon. p. 79.

(21) Id. *Ibid* After. p. 5.

(21) After. p. 5.

(22) Id. p. 6.

(23) Id. *Ibid*.

(24) W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 3.



year (871) engaged them in five pitched battles, with various success. Being mortally wounded in the last of these battles, this virtuous but unhappy prince soon after ended his life and reign, leaving his subjects and successor in the most dangerous and distressful circumstances (25). A. D. 801, to 901.

Alfred, the youngest and only surviving son of Ethelwolf, succeeded his brother Ethered A. D. 871, in the twenty-second year of his age. This excellent prince, who is justly called the Great, and hath been long esteemed the pride and glory of the English nation, began his reign under the greatest disadvantages. Many of his cities, towns, and villages, were reduced to ashes, his best provinces almost depopulated, his bravest captains and soldiers slain in battle, and a powerful army of cruel exulting barbarians, the authors of all these calamities, in the very bowels of his country. He was even unsuccessful in his first efforts to deliver his subjects from their enemies, being defeated at the battle of Wilton, which was fought within a month after his accession. The Danes, however, having lost one of their kings, nine of their generals, and prodigious numbers of their men in their late battles, and being no strangers to the courage and conduct of the youthful monarch who opposed them, consented to a peace, and agreed to retire out of the West-Saxon territories (26). In consequence of this agreement, they evacuated Reading, and retired to London, where they spent the winter (27). Burthred, brother-in-law to Alfred, who then governed Mercia, unable to dislodge these troublesome inmates by force, prevailed upon them by many valuable presents, to leave his country; from whence they marched into the kingdom of the East-Angles, and fixed their head-quarters for some time at Yorksey. Having destroyed every thing in these parts, they returned A. D. 874 into Mercia, of which they made an entire conquest, obliging Burthred to abandon his country in despair, and retire to Rome, where he soon after died (28). This Danish army, which had continued eight years in England, and had traversed and almost ruined the whole country to the north of the Thames and Severn, was

Accession  
of Alfred,  
and his first  
wars with  
the Danes.

(25) A. D. p. 7.

(27) Id. Ibid.

(26) Chron. Saxon. p. 82. A. D. p. 8.

(28) Id. Ibid.

**A. D. 801,** now become so numerous, by continual accessions of new adventurers, that it was found inconvenient to remain any longer in one body. It divided therefore at Repton in Derbyshire: one half marching northward under the command of a prince named *Haldane*, took possession of the kingdom of Northumberland, and there began to settle and apply to agriculture A. D. 875; the other half marching southward under the command of Guthrum, Oscitil, and Amund, three chieftains who had lately arrived with many followers, took up their head-quarters at Cambridge (29). Before the Danes left Mercia, they delegated the command of that country to one Ceolwulf, a weak and disloyal nobleman, who had abandoned the service of Alfred, and joined the enemies of his country (30). This was the melancholy posture of affairs in England in the beginning of the year 876.

Continuation of his wars.

That part of the Danish army which had wintered at Cambridge, marching from thence in the night, entered the kingdom of Wessex, and penetrated as far as Wareham in Dorsetshire, which they surprised (31). Alfred, roused by this invasion from the short repose which he had enjoyed since the last peace with the Danes, and finding himself unprepared to meet them in the field, entered into a negotiation with them, which ended in a treaty, by which they engaged, and confirmed their engagements by the most solemn oaths, to retire a second time out of the territories of the West-Saxons (32). But these faithless barbarians violated this treaty almost as soon as it was made, by surprising the city of Exeter, with their cavalry, to which their whole army marched A. D. 877 (33). They met, however, with a very great loss this year by sea. Being overtaken by a dreadful storm near Swanwic, as they were bringing their fleet from Wareham to Exeter, no fewer than 120 of their ships were wrecked (34). Alfred being now fully convinced, that nothing could preserve his country from being conquered but a brave resistance, collected all his forces, with which he invested Exeter by land, while a fleet which he had prepared, and manned chiefly with Frisian pirates, blocked up the harbour. This fleet hav-

(29) Chron. Saxon. p. 82, 83. A. D. p. 8. (30) Id. ibid.  
 (31) Id. ibid. (32) Chron. Saxon. p. 83. A. D. p. 8.  
 (33) Id. ibid. (34) Id. ibid.

ing happily defeated a Danish squadron, which brought a reinforcement to the besieged, the Danes in Exeter capitulated, and agreed to evacuate that city, and all the territories of the West-Saxons; which they accordingly did in August this year, and retired into Mercia, where they spent the winter (35). While they remained in Mercia, they received a great reinforcement of their countrymen; which emboldened them to return once more into the kingdom of Wessex; and having seized Chippenham, which was then a royal city, they overrun the whole country, A. D. 878 (36).

A. D. 801.  
to 901.

The West-Saxons, who, animated by the example and exhortations of their king, had made so noble a stand in defence of their country, after all the rest of England had submitted, were now at last dispirited, thinking it in vain any longer to oppose enemies who were neither bound by treaties nor diminished by defeats. Some of them fled into foreign countries, some submitted to the conquerors, and some concealed themselves in woods and forests; while the brave Alfred was abandoned by all but a few faithful friends, and his own invincible resolution (37). At length, finding it unsafe to retain even these few followers about his person, he dismissed them, to wait for better times; and putting on the dress of a country-clown, concealed himself in the cottage of a cow-herd (38). As every circumstance relating to so great a person in such deep distress appears important and interesting, the following anecdote hath been preserved by several of our ancient historians; and particularly by Asser, who probably heard it from the king's own mouth: That one day when he was sitting by the fire in the cottage where he had concealed himself, trimming his bow and arrows, he was heartily scolded by the good woman of the house (who knew not the quality of her guest) for neglecting to turn some cakes that were toasting; telling him in great anger, that he would be active enough in eating them, though he would not take the trouble to turn them (39).—Alfred did not continue long in this ignoble disguise; but as soon as the heat of the search after him was a little abated, he began to look abroad; and finding a place convenient for

Alfred's  
retire-  
ments

(35) Asser. p. 9. Chron. Saxon. p. 84.

(36) Id. *ibid.*

(37) Chron. Saxon. p. 84. Asser. p. 9.

(38) Id. *ibid.*

(39) Id. *ibid.*

A. D. 801, his purpose, at the confluence of the Thone and Paret in Somersetshire, he collected a few of the bravest of his nobility, and there built a small fort for their residence and protection. In this place, which he named *Ethelingey*, or, *The Isle of Nobles*, he continued about four months, distressing his enemies, and procuring subsistence for himself and followers by frequent excursions (40).

Alfred  
leaves his  
retire-  
ment, and  
defeats the  
Danes.

While Alfred was thus employed, he received intelligence, that Oddune earl of Devonshire had defeated a party of Danes, killed their leader, and taken their magical standard called *Refsan*, or, *The Raven* (41). Encouraged by this news of the returning spirit and success of his subjects, he resolved to leave his retreat, and make a vigorous effort for the recovery of his crown. But before he assembled his forces, he resolved to gain an exact knowledge of the strength and posture of his enemies. With this view, he entered their camp in the disguise of a harper, and diverted them so much with his music and pleasantries, that they kept him several days in their army, introduced him to their general Guthrum, and gave him an opportunity of seeing every thing he desired (42). Observing with pleasure, that the Danes were entirely off their guard, he dispatched trusty messengers to all the nobility of Somersetshire, Wiltshire, and Hampshire, commanding them to meet him, with all their followers, on a certain day, at Brixton near Selwood forest. These commands were so well obeyed, that Alfred, at the time and place appointed, beheld himself at the head of a numerous army of his subjects, transported with joy at the sight of their beloved king, and determined to die or conquer under his conduct. That he might not give their ardour time to cool, he led them directly towards Eddington, where their enemies were incamped. The Danes were surprised beyond measure at the approach of an English army, with king Alfred at their head; and he, falling upon them with great fury before they had time to recover from their surprise, gained a complete victory (43). The shattered remains of the Danish army, with their commander Guthrum,

(40) After. p. 9.

(41) Id. p. 10. Alfred. Bayenn. l. 8. p. 105.

(42) Legat. Hist. W. Sax. l. 2. c. 4.

(43) Chron. Sax. p. 85. After. p. 10.



took shelter in an old castle near the field of battle, where they were immediately invested by their victorious enemies, who soon compelled them to surrender at discretion (44). On this occasion Alfred acquired as much honour by his clemency as he had done by his valour. Instead of glutting his revenge with the blood of these prostrate wretches, he formed the benevolent design of making them useful and happy. In order to this, he proposed the following terms: That if they would become Christians and join with him to prevent the ravages of other Danes, he would spare their lives, take them under his protection and assign them sufficient territories for their residence. These conditions were joyfully accepted by Guthrum and his followers, who were baptized, and settled in East-Anglia and Northumberland, A. D. 880 (45).

A. D. 881,  
to 921.

From this period Alfred and his subjects enjoyed some repose for several years; which that excellent prince employed in repairing his ruined cities, building forts in the most convenient situations for the protection of the coasts, increasing his fleet, training his subjects to the use of arms, and in the execution of many other projects for the security and improvement of his country (46). But this repose, which had several times been a little disturbed by transient descents, was at last destroyed by a very formidable invasion. For the Danes, having all this time been making such deplorable devastations in all the provinces of France, that they had reduced themselves, as well as their enemies, to great distresses and want, resolved once more to try their fortunes in England, where they arrived A. D. 893, in a fleet of 330 ships, under their famous leader Hastings (47). The far greatest part of this mighty armament disembarked in the south-east corner of Kent, and seizing the fort of Apuldore, made it their head-quarters; while eighty sail under their chief commander Hastings, entered the Thames, and landed their men at Milton; where they erected a strong fortification, of which some vestiges are still remaining (48). Alfred was in East-Anglia, regulating the affairs of that country and of Northumberland, when he received the news of this formidable in-

Continuation of the wars between Alfred and the Danes.

(44) Chron. Saxon. p. 85. Asser. p. 10.

(45) Id. p. 86. Asser. p. 12.

(46) Id. ibid.

(47) Chron. Saxon. p. 90.

(48) Id. p. 92.

A. D. 801, <sup>to 901.</sup> vasion; and before he left these parts, he exacted a new oath of allegiance, and a greater number of hostages, from the Danes settled in these two kingdoms (49). He then directed his march southwards, collecting his forces as he advanced, and incamped near the centre of Kent, and in the middle between the two Danish armies, in order to prevent their junction, and check their excursions. In this posture the three armies remained during the greatest part of the year 894; in which innumerable skirmishes happened, between the plundering detachments of the Danes, and parties of the king's army sent out to protect the country (50). At length the great Danish army at Apuldore, having collected a considerable booty, abandoned the fortifications at that place, with a design to pass the Thames, and penetrate into Essex; but were intercepted by the king on their march, and defeated, near Farnham (51). About the same time, Hastings, with the army under his command, removed from Milton, and incamped at Beamsflete, which he fortified, and where he was afterwards joined by the remains of the other army which had escaped from Farnham. When Alfred was preparing to attack the Danes at Beamsflete, he received the disagreeable news, that those of East-Anglia and Northumberland, forgetting all their oaths and obligations, had revolted, and were besieging Exeter. Leaving, therefore, some troops in London, to protect that city against the Danes in Essex, he marched with great expedition into the west, and came upon the Danes before Exeter so unexpectedly, that they raised the siege with great precipitation, and fled to their ships (52). In the mean time, the Danes at Beamsflete, encouraged by the distance of the king, marched out on a plundering expedition; leaving their wives, children, and booty, in their camp, under a strong guard. The English troops in London having received intelligence of this, and being joined by a party of the citizens, marched out with great secrecy, attacked the Danish camp, cut the guard in pieces, and got possession of much spoil and many prisoners (53). Among these prisoners were the wife and two sons of Hastings, the Danish king or general (54). Alfred, as

(49) Chron. Saxon. p. 90.

(50) Id. p. 92.

(51) Id. ibid.

(52) Id. ibid.

(53) Id. ibid.

(54) Id. ibid.

he had done on former occasions, made a wise and moderate use of this great advantage. He restored to Hastings his wife and children, on condition of his leaving the kingdom with his followers; which greatly weakened the power of the Danes in England (55). Those who remained behind, roamed up and down the country about two years, sometimes united, and sometimes in separate bodies, inflicting and suffering many evils. At length their numbers being greatly diminished, by frequent skirmishes, and by a dreadful plague which raged in those times, they embarked at different ports of Northumberland, A. D. 897, and returned to the continent (56).

A. D. 801,  
to 901.

From this time Alfred reigned in great honour and felicity, the dread of his enemies, the darling of his subjects, and the delight of mankind; incessantly employed in strengthening, enriching, adorning his dominions, and in securing them against the return of their enemies, by a powerful fleet. But this happy period was not of long duration: for this excellent prince was carried off by death October 28, A. D. 901, in the fifty-third year of his age, and thirtieth of his reign (57).

Death of  
Alfred.

Having thus deduced the civil and military history of England, from the beginning of the ninth to the beginning of the tenth century, it may be proper to pause a little here, in order to take a short view of the similar transactions of the other British nations in the same period.

The English, during the greatest part of the ninth century, were so much engaged in defending themselves against the frequent invasions and depredations of the Danes, that they gave but little disturbance to their ancient enemies the Britons; and these last were still so much divided, and so often involved in civil wars, that they could not take advantage of the distresses of the English. Conon I'indaethy, who for more than half a century had been the most powerful prince in Wales, dying A. D. 817, was succeeded by Efyllt, his only daughter, and her husband Mervyn Vrych; in whose time happened the two expeditions of the English into Wales, which have been already mentioned. In the last

History of  
Wales.

(55) M. Well. p. 179.  
(57) Id. p. 99.

(56) Chron. Saxon. p. 96, 97.

A. D. 851, of these expeditions, Mervyn was slain in battle by the Mercians, A. D. 841, and succeeded by his son Roderic Mawr, or Roderic the Great (58). This prince inherited North Wales from his mother, Powis from his father, and obtained the government of South Wales by his marriage with the heiress of that country; on which account he got the pompous name of *Roderic the Great*. On his death, A. D. 877, his dominions were again divided between his three eldest sons, Anarawd, Cadelh, and Mervyn; of which the first got North Wales, the second South Wales, and the third Powis (59.) This division, as usual, occasioned very pernicious and lasting disputes between these princes and their posterity.

History of  
the Scots  
and Picts.

The history of North Britain begins to be a little better known, and more important, in the ninth century, than in any former period. This is chiefly owing to the union of the Scotch and Pictish kingdoms into one monarchy, which happened in the course of that century. It is, however, a little uncertain who was the immediate successor of Eochal or Achaius king of Scots, who died A. D. 819. According to the two ancient catalogues published by Father Innes, he was succeeded by a prince named *Dunegal*, who, in one of these catalogues, is called the son of Eochal, and in the other the son of Selvach (60). But Fordun, and all the modern Scotch historians, have inserted a king named *Conval* (concerning whom they do not pretend to know any thing), between Eochal and Dunegal (61). This Conval, however, seems to have been a creature of Fordun's imagination, invented to fill up a blank space, and increase the number of kings. Upon the whole, it is most probable, that Eochal was succeeded by Dunegal. To embellish the annals of this prince's reign, several of the most modern historians have related a very improbable tale, of a rebellion which was raised against him by prince Alpine, the son of Eochal, fore against his inclination, being compelled to it by some factious noblemen, who had conspired to raise him, though reluctant, to the throne (62). Fordun says not one word of this

(58) Powel Hist. Wales, p. 18.

(59) Id. p. 35.

(60) Innes, Illustr. Append. No. 4, 5. (61) Fordun, l. 3. c. 53.

(62) Boeth. l. 10. Buchan. l. 5.



strange rebellion. What the same authors relate concerning a war carried on by Dunegal against the Picts, in favour of his competitor Alpine, is no less improbable. All that we know, with any certainty, concerning this prince, is, that he died A. D. 831, and was succeeded by Alpine the son of Eochal (63). Soon after the accession of this prince, the male line of the Pictish royal family becoming extinct, he laid claim to that crown, as being the son of Fergusiana, only sister to Hungus late king of Picts, and consequently nearest heir by the female line (64). Though this claim was evidently well founded, it was rejected by the Picts; who, in order to preserve themselves from falling under the dominion of their ancient enemies, raised one Feredeth, a nobleman of their own nation, to the throne. Alpine, at the head of a powerful army of his own subjects, marched into Pictavia, to assert his right; and was met by the Pictish army, near the village of Restennot in Angus, where a bloody battle was fought; in which the Picts were defeated, and their king slain (65). Brude, the eldest son of Feredeth, succeeded his father; but was soon after murdered by his own subjects; and his brother and successor, Kenneth, shared the same fate in less than a year. The Picts then made choice of a nobleman named *Brude* to be their king, who revived their spirits, and retrieved their affairs, by his conduct and valour. He first fell upon the straggling parties of the Scots, who were plundering the country, and by defeating them, restored the hopes and courage of his subjects. After spending some time in this irregular kind of war, he collected his whole forces, in order to determine this quarrel by a decisive action. The two armies met near Dundee, and immediately engaged with the greatest fury, their hereditary hatred being inflamed by many recent injuries. The battle was very bloody, and victory remained long doubtful; but at length the Scots being thrown into disorder by the appearance of some troops in their rear, fled on all sides, and were pursued with great slaughter. King Alpine was taken prisoner in the pursuit, beheaded in cold blood at a place called *Pittalpy*; and his head, after being carried through the army on a pole, was set

A. D. 801.

to 901.

(63) Fordun, l. 5. c. 2.

(64) Boeth. l. 10. Buchan. l. 5.

(65) Buchan. l. 5.

A. D. 801, up on the walls of Abernethy, the capital city of the  
 to 901. Picts (66). This unhappy prince, if we may believe  
 the most ancient Scotch historian, was very brave, but  
 exceedingly rash and head-strong, to which he owed his  
 ruin (67).

Continuation of the  
 history of  
 the Scots  
 and Picts.

The Scots were so much dispirited by this great defeat, that Kenneth the son of Alpine, who succeeded his father A. D. 834, could not prevail upon them, for some time, to renew the war, and assist him in prosecuting his claim to the Pictish crown. On the other hand, the Picts were prevented from improving the advantage which they had gained, by a violent dissension which broke out in their army. These circumstances occasioned a suspension of hostilities between the two nations, which continued about two years. At length Kenneth, impatient of this delay, called an assembly of all the nobility of his kingdom, and endeavoured, by many arguments, to persuade them to an immediate declaration of war. But all his arguments were ineffectual; and they still insisted, that some longer time was necessary to recruit their strength and spirits, which had been so much weakened by their late defeat. The king, unwilling to relinquish his design, invited the whole assembly to an entertainment, which he prolonged till midnight, and then persuaded them to go to rest in his great hall, according to the manners of those times. When the whole company were composed to rest, a person, instructed and prepared by Kenneth, entered the apartment, clothed in the skins of dried fish, which shone in the dark, and speaking through a trumpet, commanded them to obey their king by declaring war against the Picts, and in the name of God promised them success and victory. Roused from their sleep by these tremendous sounds, and astonished at the shining figure which they beheld, they hastened to acquaint the king with the heavenly admonition, and expressed the greatest ardour for the war (68). The report of this wonderful apparition flew like lightning over the whole kingdom, and excited such impatient keeness for war in every bosom, that Kenneth soon beheld himself at the head of a numerous army of his subjects, importuning him to lead them


(66) Euseb. l. 2.

(67) Fordun, l. 5. c. 2.

(68) Boeth. l. 10. Fordun, l. 4. c. 3.

against the enemy to fulfill the will of heaven. The Picts were at this time but ill prepared to resist so dangerous an invasion. Their valiant king Brude had died of vexation for not being able to compose the dissensions of his subjects, and pursue his victory; and his brother Drust, who had succeeded him, was neither so brave nor so well beloved. This prince however, collecting his forces, marched to meet the invaders of his country: a battle was fought, in which the Scots obtained a complete victory; and animating each other with this cry, "Remember the death of Alpine," they killed prodigious numbers of the Picts in the pursuit (69). Soon after this victory, all the provinces of the Pictish kingdom to the north of the frith of Forth submitted to the conqueror; who, leaving garrisons in the strong places of that country, passed the Forth with his army. But he was presently overtaken by the disagreeable news, that the Picts had retaken all their castles, and put his garrisons to the sword. This obliged him to march back into the north, where he recovered the fortresses, and reduced the country to a more perfect subjection. In the mean time the Pictish king, having collected a considerable army of his subjects in the southern and yet unconquered provinces of his kingdom, crossed the rivers Forth and Tay, and encamped at the village of Scoon, on the northern bank of the last of these rivers. At this place the last great battle between the Picts and Scots was fought, in which the Picts were entirely defeated, their king and chief nobility slain, and almost their whole army cut in pieces, or drowned in the river Tay in attempting to escape (70). After this great victory, Kenneth met with no more opposition from the Picts, but took possession of their whole kingdom; which he united to his own dominions, and thereby became the first monarch of all Scotland, about the year 842 (71). There is not the least probability in the tragical accounts given by some Scotch historians, of the total extirpation of the Picts; which would have been equally inhuman and imprudent. There might indeed be some unwarrantable cruelties practised by the Scots in the first heat of conquest; but there is sufficient evidence, that the

A. D. 801,  
to 901.



(69) Buchan. l. 5. sub fin.

(70) Id. ibid.

(71) See Innes's Essay, vol. 1. p. 140.

A. D. 801, great body of the Pictish nation survived the downfall of their state; and mingling with their conquerors, gradually lost their own name (72). The victorious Kenneth, after he had reduced the Picts to an entire subjection to his authority, made frequent inroads on the kingdom of Northumberland, and had wars both with the Danes and Cumbrian Britons; but of the particulars of these wars we are not informed (73). This great prince finished his life and reign, in his palace at Fortaviot, February 13, A. D. 854.

Dunvennald king of Scots.

Dunvennald, the son of Alpine, succeeded his brother Kenneth; and is represented by Fordun, the most ancient Scotch historian, as a brave and warlike prince, who suppressed some insurrections of the discontented Picts, and cultivated peace with all his neighbours (74). This character is confirmed by the ancient chronicle published by Father Innes, which acquaints us, that he held a convention of his nobility at Fortaviot, in which he revived the good laws of his predecessors (75). But Boethius and Buchanan give a very different character and history of this prince, representing him as a most abandoned profligate and poltroon, who was defeated and taken prisoner by Olbert and Ella kings of Northumberland, yielded up the best part of his kingdom to obtain his liberty, and was cast into prison by his own subjects; where he put an end to his life by self-murder (76). This account however, being unsupported by any evidence, and contrary to the testimony of more ancient historians, merits no regard. Dunvennald died in his palace at Belachoir, A. D. 858.

Constantine and Eth kings of Scots.

Constantine, the eldest son of Kenneth, the illustrious conqueror of the Picts, mounted the throne of Scotland on the death of his uncle Dunvennald. The Danes, who had made some occasional descents on the coasts of Scotland in the two preceding reigns, now invaded it with a more powerful army, which landed in Fife. Constantine, falling upon one half of this army, when it was separated from the other by the river Leven, defeated that division. Flushed with this victory, he soon after passed the river, and rashly assaulted the other division

(72) See Innes's *Essays*, vol. i. p. 140.

(73) *Id.* vol. i. p. 783.

(75) Innes, vol. ii. p. 783.

(74) Fordun, l. 4. c. 15.

(76) Boeth. l. 1. c. 1. Buchanan. l. 6.



of the Danes in their camp, which was strongly fortified. A. D. 801, Here he met with a repulse; and the greatest part of his army consisting of Picts, who were not yet very hearty in the service, they shamefully fled, leaving Constantine in the hands of the enemy, who beheaded him in a neighbouring cave, A. D. 874 (77). He was succeeded by his brother Eith, surnamed *The wing-footed* on account of his swiftness; who reigned little more than one year, being mortally wounded in a battle near Inverury, by his cousin Grig, the son of Dunvenald, who claimed the crown as his right (78).

Grig Macdunvenal, denominated by the modern Scotch historians *Gregory the Great*, mounted the throne of Scotland, A. D. 875, and spent the first years of his reign in regulating the internal police of his kingdom, and conciliating the affections of all his subjects. He then reduced the Strath-Cluyd Britons to a more entire obedience to his authority, took possession of the town of Berwick, and even reduced some part of the kingdom of Northumberland (79). Having acquired great fame by these exploits, he was earnestly intreated by the friends of Donach king of Dublin to come to the protection of that young prince, who was in danger of being dethroned by some ambitious chieftains. In compliance with these intreaties, he transported an army from Galloway into Ireland, defeated the rebels, took the city of Dublin, established Donach on the throne of his ancestors, and then returned home crowned with laurels (80). This great prince, after a glorious reign of near eighteen years, died A. D. 892.

Dunvenald, the son of Constantine, succeeded Gregory the Great, and maintained with spirit the acquisitions of his predecessor. Towards the conclusion of his reign, the inhabitants of Ross and Moray made war against each other, with great ferocity and much bloodshed. The king, marching into these parts with an army, restored the peace of the country, and put the chief ring-leaders in these commotions to death; but did not long survive this event, dying at Forres A. D. 903 (81).

(77) Fordun, l. 4. c. 16. Boeth. l. 10. Buchan. l. 6.

(78) Id. *ibid.* (79) Id. *ibid.* (80) Id. *ibid.*

(81) Fordun, l. 4. c. 20.

## SECTION IV.

*The civil and military history of Great Britain, from the accession of Edward the Elder, A. D. 901, to the death of Edward the Martyr, A. D. 978.*

A. D. 901,  
to 978.

Accession  
of Edward  
the Elder.

**E**DWARD, the eldest surviving son of Alfred the Great, succeeded his illustrious father in the throne of England A. D. 901; though not without opposition from his cousin Ethelwald, the son of Ethelbert, the elder brother of Alfred. Ethered and Alfred had succeeded to the crown by virtue of their father's will, and the universal consent of the people, to the exclusion of Ethelwald, who was then an infant; but being now in the prime of life, he was not disposed to yield so tamely to one of his own age (1). Having, therefore, collected his partisans, he seized and fortified Winburn: but apprehending that it was not tenable, when Edward with his army had reached Badbury, he made his escape, and retired into Northumberland, and engaged the Danes of that country to espouse his cause (2). But before they took the field, and declared openly in his favour, Ethelwald made a trip to the continent; where he spent near three years collecting an army of adventurers of several nations, with which he landed in England A. D. 904 (3). Soon after his arrival, he was joined by great multitudes of Northumbrian and other Danes, which enabled him to over-run all Mercia, plundering and destroying the country as he advanced: but having rashly engaged in a skirmish against a party of Kentish men, he fell in the action; after which his army disbanded (4).

History of  
his reign.

Edward being thus delivered from this dangerous rival, spent several years in reducing the Danes of Essex, East-Anglia, and Mercia, to a thorough obedience to his authority, and in building towns and castles in the most convenient places for keeping them in subjection (5). It was still a more difficult task to reduce the Danes of Northumberland to order and submission, on account of

(1) Chron. Saxon. p. 100.

(4) Hen. Hunt. l. 5.

(2) Id. ibid.

(5) Chron. Saxon. p. 102.

(3) Id. ibid.

their greater numbers and greater distance. To accom- A. D. 901.  
plish this, Edward fitted out a fleet of one hundred ships to 978.  
in the ports of Kent, with which he sailed towards Northumberland A. D. 911. The Northumbrian Danes, imagining that his chief force was on board this fleet, instead of staying to defend their own country, marched southwards, in hopes of indemnifying themselves by the spoils of those richer provinces. This artful scheme at first succeeded to their wish: they advanced far into the country, and made a prodigious booty, without meeting with any opposition. But in their return home, they were overtaken at Tetenhall in Staffordshire, by an army of West-Saxons and Mercians, who defeated them, with great slaughter, and recovered all the booty (6). The Northumbrian Danes were so much weakened by the loss which they sustained in this battle, that they remained tolerably quiet for several years. Edward, however, was kept in continual action during his whole reign, by the frequent invasions of the piratical Danes from abroad, and the no less frequent insurrections of their countrymen settled in England. But this brave prince, by his vigilance and activity, repelled all those invasions, and suppressed all these insurrections, before they had done much mischief. In order to prevent the like dangers and disturbances for the future, he built and fortified an incredible number of forts and towns in all parts of England (7). In all these noble toils for the defence and security of his dominions, Edward was greatly assisted by his sister Ethelfleda, widow of Ethernod governor of Mercia. This heroic princess (who inherited more of the spirit of the great Alfred than any of his children), despising the humble cares and trifling amusements of her own sex, commanded armies, gained victories, built cities, and performed exploits which would have done honour to the greatest princes (8). Having governed Mercia eight years after the death of her husband, she died A. D. 920, and Edward took the government of that country into his own hands (9). After this he not only secured, but extended his dominions, and by a successful expedition into Wales A. D. 922, reduced the three princes of that country to a state of subjection; and the next year he brought the Strath-Cluyd Britons,

(6) Chron. Saxon. p. 203.

(c) Id. *ibid*.

(7) Id. p. 103—107.

(9) Id. p. 107.

A. D. 901, into the same condition (10). In the midst of these suc-  
cesses, Edward ended his life and reign at Farington in  
to 978. Berkshire A. D. 925. This king was very happy in his  
family, having left behind him five sons, of which three,  
viz. Athelstan, Edmond, and Edred, were successively  
kings of England, and nine daughters, of which four  
were married to the greatest princes then in Europe (11).

Accession  
of Athel-  
stan.

Athelstan, the eldest son of Edward, succeeded him in  
the throne of England, and was solemnly crowned at  
Kingston upon Thames, by Athelm archbishop of Can-  
terbury (12). Historians, both ancient and modern, are  
much divided in their opinions about this prince's birth,  
some denying, and others asserting his legitimacy. On  
the one hand, there is sufficient evidence, that his mo-  
ther Egwina was a lady of mean birth, which seems to  
have given occasion to this dispute about the legitimacy  
of her son; and, on the other hand, it is no less evident,  
that Athelstan was treated by his grandfather Alfred the  
Great, and by his father Edward, with every mark of  
distinction due to a legitimate prince (13). However this  
may be, a conspiracy is said to have been formed by a  
nobleman named *Alfred*, and some others, to take king  
Athelstan prisoner, put out his eyes, and raise one of  
his brothers to the throne. This plot was happily dis-  
covered, and Alfred brought to his trial: but the proof  
of his guilt not being clear, he was sent to Rome to de-  
clare his innocence by oath before the Pope; which he  
did accordingly; but soon after died, with such circum-  
stances as, in that superstitious age, were esteemed suf-  
ficient indications of his guilt (14).

Makes Si-  
thric king  
of North-  
umberland.

Sithric, prince of the Northumbrian Danes, was the  
only person who enjoyed any shadow of independent  
authority in England at this time; and Athelstan, in  
order to attach him firmly to his interest, upon his re-  
nouncing Paganism, and embracing Christianity, gave  
him his own sister Edgetha in marriage (15). To ren-  
der him more worthy of this alliance, and of the title of  
King, he yielded to him the sovereignty of the whole  
country from the river Tees to Edinburgh, which seems  
then to have been the northern extremity of the English  
territories (16). But the success of this wise measure

(10) Chron. Saxon. p. 110.

(11) W. Malms. l. 2. c. 5.

(12) Id. c. 5.

(13) See Biograph. Britan. vol. 1. p. 60.

(14) W. Malms. l. 2. c. 6.

(15) Alured. Bever. l. 8. p. 109.

(16) J. Waddingford, apud Gale, l. 1. p. 540.



was defeated by the death of Sithric, and the succession of his two sons by a former wife, Anlaff and Guthfert, who renounced Christianity, and cast off all subjection to the king of England. Athelstan, upon this, marched an army into Northumberland, and soon obliged the two rash princes to abandon their country, Anlaff flying into Ireland, and Guthfert to the court of Constantine king of Scotland (17). Ambassadors were immediately sent to Constantine to demand Guthfert: but that prince, unwilling to violate the laws of hospitality, allowed his guest to escape; and no less unwilling to embroil himself with so powerful an enemy, proposed a personal interview with Athelstan; which accordingly took place at Dackers in Cumberland, where all their differences were compromised in an amicable manner (18).

A. D. 901.  
to 678.

This amity was neither cordial nor of long continuance. For Constantine, envying the prosperity, and dreading the power, of Athelstan, formed a confederacy against him, into which Anlaff, the pretender to Northumberland, Ewen prince of Cumberland, and some other petty princes, entered. Athelstan having received intelligence of this confederacy, invaded Scotland A. D. 934 both by sea and land, before Constantine was prepared for his defence; which obliged that prince to sue for peace, which he obtained upon making certain submissions (19).

Invades  
Scotland.

Athelstan was no sooner returned into his own dominions, than his enemies renewed their confederacy, and acting with greater caution than they had done before, employed four years in making preparations for a formidable invasion of England. At length, all things being ready, the allies united their forces, and invaded England A. D. 938, with a very powerful army, composed of many different nations. Athelstan raised his forces with great expedition, and came within view of his enemies at a place called *Brunanburgh* by our ancient historians; the true situation of which is not certainly known (20).

The Scots  
&c. invade  
England.

While the two armies lay near this place, Anlaff practised the same stratagem to gain intelligence, which Alfred the Great had formerly practised with so much success. He entered the English camp in the disguise

Story of  
Anlaff one  
of the con-  
federates.

(17) W. Malmsh. l. 2. c. 6.

(18) Id. ibid.

(19) Hoveden. Annal. Chron. Saxon. p. 111.

(20) Id. p. 112.

**A. D. 901,** of a strolling minstrel, was introduced to Athelstan's tent, and played before him and his chief officers at an entertainment; for which he was rewarded with a piece of money at his departure. An absurd pride would not suffer Anlaff to carry off this money; but when he had got at some distance from the king's tent, and imagined no person observed him, he deposited it in the ground. This action was perceived by a soldier, who, viewing the pretended harper more narrowly, discovered who he was. The soldier had formerly served under Anlaff, and from a principle of honour would not betray his old master; but as soon as he was out of danger, informed Athelstan of his discovery; and at the same time humbly advised him to remove his tent to a considerable distance from the place where it then stood. The wisdom of this advice very soon appeared. For a bishop with his retinue arriving in the camp soon after, unfortunately pitched his tent where the royal pavilion had stood, and the very next night was attacked, and cut in pieces, with all his followers (21).

**Battle of Brunenburgh, and victory of Athelstan over the confederates.**

The noise occasioned by this attack on the English camp brought on a general engagement between the two armies, which continued from morning to night, with incredible fury and prodigious slaughter on both sides. This battle, which was long distinguished by the name of *the great battle*, is described in very pompous strains by the Saxon Chronicle, and all our ancient historians (22). Without following these writers through their long details, which are not very intelligible, it is enough to say, that victory, which was so bravely disputed, and so long doubtful, declared at last in favour of the English; that no fewer than five of the allied princes, and twelve chieftains, were slain; and that Constantine and Anlaff made their escape with great difficulty (23). This glorious victory not only reduced all England under the dominion of Athelstan, and obliged the princes of Wales who had been concerned in the late conspiracy to submit to pay a very great additional tribute, but it also raised his reputation so high among foreign

(21) W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 6.

(22) Chron. Saxon. p. 112, 113. W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 6. Ethelwerd, c. 5. Ingulph. Prompt. p. 835. Humm. l. 5, &c. &c.

(23) Id. ibid.

nations, that the greatest princes in Europe courted his alliance (24). A. D. 901,  
to 978.

Athelstan did not live long to enjoy this great prosperity, but died at Gloucester A. D. 941; and having never been married, was succeeded in the throne of England by his brother Edmund (25). Death of  
Athelstan,  
and acceſ-  
ſion of Ed-  
mund.

This prince was in the bloom of youth, being only eighteen years of age when he began his reign. In the time of Alfred the Great, a colony of Danes had been allowed to settle in the five towns of Derby, Nottingham, Leicester, Lincoln, and Stamford, where their posterity still continued under the name of the Five Burghers. Edmund, observing that these five burghers had been ever ready to favour the insurrections of their countrymen, thought it imprudent to suffer them to continue any longer so near the centre of his dominions; and therefore he removed them, A. D. 942, from these towns, and settled them in other places (26). Edmund  
defeats the  
five burgh-  
ers.

Anlaf, the famous pretender to the kingdom of Northumberland, who had fled into Ireland after the unfortunate battle of Brunanburgh, hearing of the death of Athelstan, returned into Britain, accompanied with his cousin Reginald, and attempted to raise fresh commotions. But Edmund having marched against them before they were prepared, the two princes, with many of their followers, made the most humble submissions; and at the same time declaring their willingness to become Christians, their submissions were accepted, and Edmund stood godfather to them both at their baptism (27). It soon appeared, that their professions of submission, and of Christianity, were equally insincere; which obliged Edmund to march his army a second time into Northumberland, from whence he expelled the two apostate princes, and once more reduced that country to his obedience, A. D. 944 (28). As the Cumbrian and Strath-Cluyd Britons had constantly assisted the Northumbrian Danes in all their revolts, Edmund marched his army into their country A. D. 945; and having conquered it, he bestowed it on Malcolm king of Scotland, on condition of his defending the north of Eng- Reduces  
Northum-  
berland  
and Cum-  
berland.

(24) Ingulf. Hist.

(25) Chron. Saxon. p. 114.

(26) Id. ibid. Hen. Hunt. l. 5.

(27) W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 7.

(28) Id. ibid. Chron. Saxon. p. 114.

A. D. 901, land from the insurrections and invasions of the  
to 978. Danes (29).

Death of  
king Ed-  
mund.

These first measures of Edmund were conducted with so much prudence and spirit, that the English had reason to hope for a happy and glorious reign. But these hopes were blasted by the immature death of that young prince, which happened in a very extraordinary manner. As he was solemnizing the feast of St. Austin, the apostle of the English, at Pucklechurch in Gloucestershire, an audacious robber, named Leolf, had the confidence to enter the hall where the king and his nobles were feasting. An officer attempted to turn him out; but Leolf making resistance, the king, flushed with liquor, and inflamed with passion, sprung from his seat, seized him by the hair, and brought him to the ground. The ruffian, reduced to this extremity, drew his dagger, and plunged it into the bosom of his sovereign, who instantly expired (30). Thus perished this hopeful prince, A. D. 948, in the seventh year of his reign, and twenty-fourth of his age.

Accession  
and reign  
of Edred.

Though Edmund left two infant sons, Edwi and Edgar, he was succeeded by his brother Edred, who mounted the throne without the least opposition. It was now become a kind of custom for the Northumbrian Danes to revolt at the accession of every new king, to try his strength and spirit. On this occasion they found, that Edred was no less alert than his predecessors; for appearing in the heart of their country, at the head of an army, before they were ready for resistance, they were obliged to make the most humble submissions to avert the impending storm (31). Malcolm king of Scots was also induced by the proximity of Edred and his army, to renew his professions of fidelity (32). Having thus reduced every thing in the north to perfect order and submission, he returned into the south, in hopes of enjoying the blessings of a lasting peace. But it was not long before he discovered that these hopes were not well founded. For the turbulent Northumbrians, impatient of tranquillity, broke out again into rebellion, first under the conduct of the famous Anlaf, and afterwards under the command of one of their countrymen named

(29) W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 7. Chron. Saxon p. 115.

(30) W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 7. Hen. Hunt. l. 5.

(31) Hen. Hunt. l. 5. W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 7. (32) Id. *ibid.*



*Erie.* Edred, justly incensed at their turbulence and infidelity, desolated their country with fire and sword, divested it for ever of the name of a kingdom, appointing one Osulf, an Englishman, to the government of it, A. D. 952, with the title of *Earl* (33). From this time Edred was no more disturbed with war; but falling into an infirm state of health, he unfortunately resigned his conscience, his treasures, and his authority, into the hands of St. Dunstan, by whom they were very much abused. After languishing some time, Edred died in the flower of his youth, A. D. 955 (34).

A. D. 951,  
to 978.

Edwi, the eldest son of the late king Edmund, succeeded his uncle Edred, and was crowned at Kingston, by Odo archbishop of Canterbury (35). Nothing can be more melancholy than the story of this unhappy prince. He was hardly seventeen years of age when he mounted the throne, remarkably beautiful in his person, and not untoward in his dispositions; but a violent passion which he contracted for his cousin, the fair Elgiva, became a source of many misfortunes to them both. His marriage with that princess was opposed by Odo archbishop of Canterbury, and by the famous St. Dunstan, the great patron and idol of the monks of those times, on account of their being within the prohibited degrees of kindred. Edwi, deaf to their advice, surmounted every obstacle, and married the object of his affections; which brought upon him the indignation of Odo, Dunstan, and all their monkish followers, who exclaimed against this marriage as a most horrid and unpardonable crime, and treated both the king and queen with the most indecent rudeness, breaking in upon their privacies, and tearing them from each others arms (36). Edwi, enraged at this intolerable insolence, and excited to vengeance by his beloved Elgiva, banished Dunstan out of the kingdom, and expelled the Benedictine monks from several monasteries, restoring them to the secular canons, their original owners (37). These measures, though just and reasonable, raised the resentment of the irascible monks, and of their mighty patron archbishop Odo, to the greatest height. That brutal bigot, forget-

Accession  
and reign  
of Edwi.

(33) Hoveden. Annal. pars prior, p. 243. Hen. Hunt. l. 5.

(34) Id. ibid.

(35) Hoveden. Annal. p. 244. (36) W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 7.

(37) Id. ibid.

A. D. 901,  
to 978.

ting all the ties of duty and humanity, seized the queen by a strong party of armed men, defaced her beauty with a hot iron, and sent her into Ireland (38). To put it out of the power of the unhappy Edwi to punish the authors of this most cruel injury, Odo and his monks poisoned the minds of his subjects by their calumnies, and excited the people of Northumberland and Mercia to rebellion, placing his younger brother Edgar, who was then only thirteen years of age, at the head of the insurgents (39). As Edwi did not expect, so he was not prepared for this event. Edgar, assisted by Dunstan now returned from banishment, soon made himself master of the whole country to the north of the river Thames; of which he was declared sovereign, with the title of *King of Mercia* (40). To complete the misfortunes of the wretched Edwi, he received intelligence, that his beloved wife Elgiva, having recovered from her wounds, and escaped from her keepers, and returned to England, had been intercepted at Gloucester, as she was hastening towards him, and put to death, with circumstances of peculiar cruelty (41). He did not long survive this unfortunate object of his affections; for having retired to the kingdom of Wessex, which still continued faithful to his interests, he there died of a broken heart, A. D. 959; by which his brother Edgar became sovereign of all England.

Accession  
and reign  
of Edgar  
the Peace-  
able.

Though that prince had discovered a criminal impatience to ascend the throne (for which his youth is the best excuse), he filled it with great honour to himself and advantage to his subjects; by which he obtained the title of *The honour and delight of the English nation* (42). He was also surnamed *Edgar the Peaceable*; an appellation which he acquired, by being always so well prepared for war, that neither his own subjects, nor other nations, dared to disturb the tranquillity of his dominions. His attention to maritime affairs was the chief glory of his reign, and his fleet was so powerful, and so well conducted, that it effectually secured the coast from all insults, and procured him much respect from neighbouring states and princes (43). Eight of these princes

(38) Anglo-Saxon, l. 2. p. 84.

(39) *Id.* 33.

(40) Anglo-Saxon, p. 84.

(41) Anglo-Saxon, l. 8. p. 113. Flor. Wigorn. p. 607.

Exempt. p. 609.

(42) R. Hoveden. Annal.

(43) W. Malmsbury, l. 1. c. 8.

(among whom was Kenneth III. king of Scots) are said A. D. 901,  
to 978. to have attended the court of Edgar at Chester, and to have rowed him in the royal barge, on the river Dee, as a mark of their subjection, according to some historians, or of their regard and friendship, according to others. If this event really happened, it was perhaps no more than a frolic, without any serious meaning (44). The magnificence of his court attracted many foreigners, from different parts of the continent, who are said to have imported the vices of their respective countries, and corrupted the simple manners of the English (45). He imposed a new and very uncommon kind of tribute on the princes of Wales; exacting from them, instead of the money and cattle which they paid before, three hundred wolves heads yearly; which occasioned such a keen pursuit of these destructive animals, that their numbers were very much diminished in a few years (46). Edgar is also celebrated for his diligence and impartiality in the administration of justice; by which he gave a great check to the too prevailing crimes of theft and robbery (47). It must however be acknowledged, that as this prince owed much of the prosperity of his reign to the powerful support of St. Dunstan and his monks, who were the idols and oracles of the people, so he owes much of his fame with posterity to the pens of monkish historians. These cloistered annalists set no bounds to their abuse of those princes who were unfriendly to their order, nor to their panegyrics on those who were their patrons and benefactors. According to them, Edgar was not only a brave, wise, and active prince, but also a prodigious saint: a character to which he had not the least pretensions, as appears from the accounts of his very criminal amours, preserved by these very historians (48). This prince, so great in his public, and so exceptionable in his private character, died A. D. 975, in the seventeenth year of his reign, and thirty-third of his life, leaving two sons, Edward and Ethelred, who successively mounted the throne of England.

The succession was for some time disputed by these two young princes, or rather by their respective parties. Dispute  
about the  
succe-  
ssion.

(44) W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 8. Floren. Wigorn. A. D. 973.

(45) Floren. Wigorn. A. D. 973. (46) Id. ibid.

(47) Id. ibid.

(48) W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 8. Hoveden. Brompt. p. 865, &c.

A. D. 90<sup>r</sup>,  
to 97<sup>8</sup>

Elfrida, the queen dowager, had formed a powerful party to support the pretensions of her son Ethelred, who was then only seven years of age, in hopes of having the administration in her own hands during his minority (49). This party pretended, that Edward was illegitimate, and that his mother had never been regularly married to the late king. But Edward, by his riper age, his father's last will, and the popularity of St. Dunstan, who espoused his interest, at length prevailed, and was crowned by that bustling prelate (50).

Accession,  
reign, and  
death, of  
Edward  
the Mar-  
tyr.

This young prince (whose short reign was one continued series of ecclesiastical disputes) was of too gentle a disposition for that iron age in which he lived. He showed no resentment against those who had opposed his succession, treated his rival brother with the greatest kindness, and behaved respectfully to his ambitious stepmother. But all this goodness made no impression on the unrelenting heart of that aspiring woman. Elfrida still meditated the destruction of this amiable prince; and it was not long before the unsuspecting innocence of Edward afforded her an opportunity of executing her design; for as he was hunting one day near Corfe castle, where she resided, he rode up to the castle, without any attendants, to pay her a passing visit. The treacherous Elfrida received him with great seeming kindness; and upon his declining to alight, presented him with a cup of wine; but as he was drinking, he was stabbed in the back, either by her own hand, or by her order. Edward, finding himself wounded, put spurs to his horse; but fainting through loss of blood, he fell from the saddle, and was dragged along by his foot sticking in the stirrup till he expired (51). Thus fell this amiable young prince A. D. 970; and though religion was no way concerned in his death, he obtained the name of *Edward the Martyr*, on account of the innocence of his life, and the many miracles which the monks pretended were wrought at his grave (52). The succession of her son Ethelred protected the cruel Elfrida from all punishment for this horrid deed; but though she lived many years after, building monasteries, performing penances, and practising all the tricks of super-

(49) W. Malmsb. l. 2. c. 9.

(50) W. Malmsb. l. 2. c. 9.

(51) B. Wroden. Annal.

(52) Id. *ibid.*



stitution, she never could recover either the peace of her A. D. 971,  
own mind or the good opinion of the world (53).  
to 978.

BEFORE we proceed to give an account of the civil and military transactions of the long and calamitous reign of Ethelred, it may be proper to bring down the history of the other nations of Britain, from the beginning of the tenth century, to this period.

In the beginning of the tenth century, Anarawd, the eldest son of Roderic the Great, was prince of North Wales, and Cadelh, his second son, prince of South Wales and Powessland. Cadelh dying A. D. 907, was succeeded in his principality by his eldest son Howel Dha, or Howel the Good, the famous legislator of the Welsh; and about six years after, Anarawd, at his death, was succeeded in his principality of North Wales by his eldest son Edwal Voel (54). But though these two princes possessed the chief authority in Wales, yet each of them had several brothers, to whom appanages were allotted, and who were a kind of petty sovereigns in their respective districts. This was the occasion of many wars in Wales, and of much confusion in its history. Edwal Voel, the chief prince of North Wales, was slain in a battle by some Danish pirates, A. D. 939: and though he left no fewer than six sons, yet his cousin Howel Dha was so famous for his wisdom, justice, and other virtues, that he obtained the dominion of all Wales, and retained it to his death, which happened A. D. 948 (55).

It must be confessed, that we have no very distinct account in history of the precise time when the princes of Wales became tributaries to the kings of England. It is, however, sufficiently evident, that they were so in the former part of the tenth century. For by the laws of Howel Dha, the king of Aberfraw, or the chief king of Wales, is appointed to pay a fine of sixty-three pounds of silver to the king of London, when he receives his kingdom from his hand, and a certain number of dogs, hawks, and horses, annually (56). Some English historians affirm indeed, that Athelstan, who was cotemporary with Howel Dha, imposed on the prince of North Wales an annual tribute of twenty pounds of gold, three

History of  
Wales.

The  
Welsh tri-  
butaries  
to the  
English.

(53) W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 9.

(54) Powel Hitt. Wales, p. 44, 45.

(56) Leges Hoeli Dha, p. 199.

(55) Id. ibid.

A. D. 901, hundred pounds of silver, twenty-five thousand oxen, to 908, and an indefinite number of dogs and hawks (57). But this is quite incredible, and the ancient laws of Wales, which have been admirably well preserved, are much better authorities than the testimony of any private historian (58).

History of  
Wales  
continued.

The death of Howel Dha was much and justly lamented by the Welsh, as they were thereby disunited, and involved in civil wars. South Wales was divided between Owen, Run, Roderic, and Edwin, the four sons of Howel Dha, and North Wales between Jevaf and Jago, two of the sons of Edwal Voel; and a war was carried on between these near relations, with no little animosity, for several years. In the course of this war, the sons of Howel Dha were several times defeated, and the two brothers Jevaf, and Jago obtained the sovereignty of all Wales: but soon after, quarrelling between themselves, Jevaf was taken and imprisoned by Jago A. D. 967. Some years after, Howel, the son of Jevaf, collected a great number of followers, defeated and expelled his uncle Jago, and delivered his father from prison; but did not restore him to his authority. While the princes of North Wales were engaged in these unnatural quarrels, Eneon, the son of Owen the eldest son of Howel Dha, recovered the dominion of South Wales. The Welsh, in this period, were not only much afflicted by these incessant broils among their own princes, but frequently plundered by the piratical Danes, and often invaded by their more powerful neighbours the English; which rendered their condition, in spite of all their native valour, very unhappy (59).

History of  
Scotland,  
reign of  
Constantine.

Constantine, the son of Eth, and grandson of the illustrious Kenneth, conqueror of the Picts, mounted the throne of Scotland in the third year of the tenth century, and reigned about thirty-five years. He was cotemporary with the two great kings of England, Edward the Elder, and Athelstan; with whom he had several wars; but the circumstances of these wars are so differently related by the Scotch and English historians, that it is very difficult to discover the truth with certainty. The most probable account of these wars hath been

(57) W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 6.

(58) Id. *ibid.*

(59) Powel, Hist. p. 58--67.

already given in the history of Athelstan. It is further A. D. 901,  
to 978. probable, or rather certain, that Constantine had been obliged to relinquish to Athelstan the sovereignty of the low countries, between the rivers Tweed and Forth, which had been chiefly inhabited by Saxons for several centuries, though they had sometimes been under the dominion of the Picts and Scots (60). Constantine seems also to have interfered considerably in the affairs of Ireland; but the particulars of these transactions are not distinctly known (61). We have very different accounts of the time and manner of this prince's death; some historians affirming, that he fell in the fatal battle of Brunanburgh, A. D. 938; while others assert, on better authority, that he made his escape from that battle; and that he soon after resigned his crown, and retired into the monastery of the Culdees at St. Andrew's, where he spent the five last years of his life (62).

Upon the resignation of Constantine, Mael, the son of Dunvenald, called by historians *Malcolm I.* Malcolm I. became king of Scotland; and finding his country much exhausted by the late wars, wisely resolved to cultivate peace with all his neighbours. Edmund king of England having suppressed a rebellion of the Danes of Northumberland A. D. 944, and subdued the Cumbrian Britons the year after, gave the government of their country to Malcolm, to engage him in an alliance against the Danes, their common enemies (63). Malcolm, some years after, with the consent of Edred king of England, transferred this government to Indulf, his presumptive successor; and from thenceforward Cumberland became a kind of appanage to the apparent heirs of the kings of Scotland (64). This good king was murdered by a gang of robbers, at Urline in Moray, A. D. 952.

Indulf prince of Cumberland, son of the late king Indulf. Constantine, succeeded Malcolm I. in the throne of Scotland, and bestowed his principality on Duff, the son of Malcolm. Indulf continued faithful to his engagements with the English against the Danes; which gained him the favour of the first, and drew upon him the

(60) Ethelred, p. 357. Brompt. p. 838. Fordun, l. 4. c. 23.

(61) Innes's Essays, vol. 2. p. 786.

(62) W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 6. Ingulf. Hist. Innes's Essays, vol. 2. p. 786. Fordun, l. 4. c. 23.

(63) W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 7. Fordun, l. 4. c. 25. (64) Id. ibid.

A. D. 901, indignation of the last of these nations. From one of  
 to 978 the kings of England, his cotemporaries (which were  
 { Edred, Edwi, and Edgar), he obtained a voluntary cession  
 of the castle and town of Edinburgh, with the fine  
 country between the Tweed and Forth; which from  
 thenceforward was considered as a part of the kingdom  
 of Scotland (65). The Danes enraged at this good  
 agreement between the British monarchs, appeared with  
 a great fleet and army on the coast of Scotland; and af-  
 ter having in vain attempted to land in several places,  
 put out to sea, as if they had designed to abandon the  
 enterprise, but returning suddenly, they landed without  
 opposition near Cullen, in the country of Boyn. Indulf  
 hastened thither with his army, engaged and defeated  
 the Danes; but was unfortunately killed in the pursuit,  
 A. D. 961 (66).

Duff. Duff prince of Cumberland then became king of Scot-  
 land, and ceded (as was now become the custom) his  
 principality to Culen, the son of Indulf. Nothing can  
 more clearly demonstrate the want of authentic materi-  
 als to fill up the history of Scotland at this period, than  
 the ridiculous tales of witchcrafts and prodigies which  
 Boece and Buchanan relate in the life of this king (67).  
 The truth is, we know no more of him but this, that he  
 was very active in his endeavours to suppress the bands  
 of robbers with which his kingdom was infested; and  
 that he was surprised and slain by some of these lawless  
 miscreants, near the town of Forres, in the fifth year  
 of his reign, A. D. 965 (68).

Culen. Culen succeeded Duff; and is represented by all our  
 historians as a libidinous and profligate prince, who was  
 murdered by Eadhard thane of Methwen, for having vi-  
 olated the chastity of his daughter, A. D. 970 (69).

Kenneth II. Kenneth II. son of Malcolm I. and brother of the  
 late king Duff, succeeded Culen, and by his wife and  
 vigorous administration rectified the disorders which  
 had prevailed in the reign of his profligate predecessor.  
 The Danes, who in this period brought so many calami-  
 ties on England, did not leave Scotland undisturbed.  
 For a great army of that nation landed near Montrose,  
 plundered the open country, and besieged the town of

(65) *Innes's Essays*, vol. 2. p. 787.(67) *Boeth.* l. 11. *Buchan.* l. 6.(69) *Id. ibid.* c. 27.(66) *Fordun*, l. 4. c. 25.(68) *Fordun*, l. 4. c. 26.



Perth. Kenneth having collected an army of his subjects at Stirling, marched to raise the siege. This brought on a battle between the two armies, at Loncarty near Perth; in which the Scots were in great danger of being defeated, and had already begun to fly; when they were prevailed upon by the threats, reproaches, and example of a husbandman, named *Hay*, and his two sons, to return and renew the fight; by which they obtained a complete victory. The king, by the advice of his nobles, rewarded Hay and his sons (from whom the very ancient and noble family of Errol is said to be descended) with a large tract of land in the fertile plains of Gowrie (70). It is, however, a little surprising, that Fordun, the most ancient Scotch historian, makes no mention of this Danish invasion, nor of this famous battle of Loncarty. This prince is said to have obtained a formal cession of the country on the north of the Tweed, inhabited by the English, on condition that he allowed the people of that country to use the English laws and speak the English language (71). Kenneth was cut off by a conspiracy in the twenty-fourth year of his reign, A. D. 994, though the manner and circumstances of his death are not well known (72).

A. D. 991,  
to 998.

## SECTION V.

*The civil and military history of Great Britain, from the accession of Ethelred the Unready, A. D. 978, to the landing of William duke of Normandy, A. D. 1066.*

THE reign of Ethelred, surnamed *the Unready*, who succeeded his brother Edward the Martyr A. D. 978, was one of the most calamitous in the English history. These calamities, we are assured by several monkish historians, were foretold by their favourite St. Dunstan, at

A. D. 978,  
to 1066.

Accession  
of Ethel-  
red the  
Unready.

(70) Boeth. Hist. l. 11. Buchan. l. 6.

(71) J. Wallingford, apud Gale, l. 1. p. 545.

(72) Fordun, l. 4. c. 33.

A. D. 978, the baptism of this prince, and discovered in a very extraordinary manner (1).

Descents  
of the  
Danes on  
the coasts  
of Eng-  
land.

The piratical Danes, who for more than half a century had given the English very little disturbance, began again to cast their rapacious eyes on this country soon after the accession of this unfortunate king. Their first attempts seem to have been made with diffidence, by a small number of adventurers. In the year 981, a few of these rovers plundered Southampton; and putting their booty on board their fleet, consisting of seven ships, departed with precipitation (2). By degrees, these descents upon the English coasts became more frequent and more formidable. In the year 991 an English army was defeated near Maldon, and their commander duke Brithnot slain, by a party of these plunderers (3). Ethelred, instead of revenging this affront, followed the cowardly and imprudent advice of Siricius archbishop of Canterbury, and gave the victorious Danes a bribe of 10,000*l.* to depart (4). This measure was productive of consequences which might easily have been foreseen. Another fleet of Danes appeared upon the English coasts the very next year, and put into different ports, in hopes of being bought off in the same manner. Ethelred, on this occasion, called an assembly of all the great men, both of the clergy and laity; in which it was resolved to collect as great a fleet as possible at London, in order to block up the Danish fleet in some harbour. But the success of these wise and vigorous counsels was prevented by the treachery of Ealfric duke of Mercia, one of the commanders of the English fleet, who warned the Danes of their danger; which gave them an opportunity to escape, with the loss of only one ship (5). Ealfric carried his treachery still further, and deserted to the Danes, when the English fleet pursued and engaged them, which prevented their destruction.

Swein  
king of  
Denmark,  
and Olave  
king of  
Norway,  
invade  
England.

Hitherto the Danish depredations had been conducted only by adventurous chieftains; but in the year 993 England was invaded by a royal fleet and army, com-

(1) *Minxit namque cum baptizaretur in sacro fonte. Unde vir Doctissimi exterminium Anglorum in tempore ejus futurum predixit.* Hen. Hunt. l. 4. W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 10.

(2) Chron. Saxon. v. 125.

(3) *Id. ibid.* p. 126.

W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 10.

(4) *Id. ibid.*

(5) Chron. Saxon. p. 127.

manded by two kings in person, Swein king of Denmark, and Olave king of Norway. These princes sailed up the Humber, landed their men, and plundered Lindfay; after which they marched into Northumberland; where the people and nobility, being for the most part of the Danish blood, made very little resistance (6). Having wintered in that country, they embarked in the spring, entered the river Thames, and invested London, in hopes of hastening the conquest of the kingdom, by the reduction of the capital. But being repulsed in all their assaults by the undaunted citizens, they were obliged to raise the siege, and in revenge wasted all the open country with fire and sword. Ethelred could think of no better method of putting a stop to their depredations, than by offering them the sum of 16,000*l.* to desist, and depart the kingdom: which these royal ravagers thought proper to accept; and having spent the winter quietly at Southampton, returned to their respective dominions in the spring A. D. 995 (7).

A. D. 978,  
to 1066.

The calm occasioned by the departure of the two kings was of very short duration. For in the years 997 and 998, armies of Danes landed, and made dreadful devastations in the south-west of England, defeating all the detached parties of the English which attempted to oppose them (8). In this year 999 these destructive ravagers changed the scene of action, and sailing up the Thames and Medway, defeated an army of Kentishmen near Rochester, and desolated the adjacent country (9). Ethelred collected a fleet and raised an army this year; but they were both so ill conducted, that they served only to exhaust his treasures and oppress his subjects; which obliged him to have recourse again to the wretched expedient of bribing his enemies, who would accept of no less than 24,000*l.* (10).

Descents  
of the  
Danes

In order to gain the friendship of a nation from whose enmity he and his subjects had sustained so many injuries, Ethelred, being now a widower, demanded in marriage the beautiful Emma, sister to Richard II. duke of Normandy, of Danish blood; and that princess arriving in England A. D. 1002, the marriage was consummated.

Marriage  
of Ethel-  
red and  
Emma,  
and mas-  
sacre of  
the Danes  
in Eng-  
land.

(6) Chron. Saxon. p. 127.

(7) Id. p. 128. Hen. Hunt. l. 5. p. 205.

(8) Chron. Saxon. p. 129.

(9) Id. *ibid.* p. 130. (10) Id. *ibid.* R. Hoveden. pars prior.  
ed

A. D. 978, cd (11). This measure might perhaps have been productive of salutary consequences, if another of a contrary tendency had not been soon after adopted. This was the massacre of the Danes settled in England, who are said to have been butchered by the enraged English, on Sunday November 13, A. D. 1002, without distinction of rank, age, or sex. Among other persons of distinction who were murdered on this fatal day, was Gunilda, sister to Swein king of Denmark, with her husband and children (12). Some young Danes found means to escape from the general slaughter of their countrymen in London, and carried the dismal news to their sovereign in his own dominions (13). It is easy to imagine what a storm of rage these tidings raised in the bosom of that ferocious prince; which made him pour forth the most direful denunciations of vengeance against the English, and employ the greatest diligence to carry these denunciations into execution. Accordingly, in the spring of A. D. 1003, Swein landed in the south-west of England with a powerful army, took the city of Exeter, and spread desolation far and near (14).

War between  
Swein  
king of  
Denmark  
and the  
English.

The English, sensible that they could expect no mercy from their fierce enraged enemies, prepared to make a vigorous defence. But the command of the army being imprudently given to Ealfric duke of Mercia, that hoary traitor once more betrayed his trust; and feigning himself sick when the two armies were on the point of engaging, the English were so dispirited, that they disbanded without fighting (15). Ealfric dying soon after, was succeeded both in the government of Mercia and the command of the English army by a still greater traitor. This was the infamous Ædric Streon, who had been raised by Ethelred from an inferior station to the highest honours of the state, and married to his own sister (16). This monster of villany and ingratitude discovered all the counsels of his sovereign to the enemy, and, by one means or other, disappointed every scheme that was formed for the defence of his country (17).

(11) Hen. Hunt. l. 6.

(12) Chron. Saxon. p. 133. W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 10. Hen. Hunt. l. 6.

(13) Ypod Neust. p. 427. (14) Chron. Saxon. p. 133.

(15) Id. ibid. Hen. Hunt. l. 6. (16) W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 10.

(17) Id. ibid. l. 2. c. 10.



It would be tedious and unpleasant to give a minute detail of all the ravages of the Danes, and miseries of the English, in this calamitous period, who for ten successive years were pursued by a continued series of disgraces and disasters. Exeter, Norwich, Oxford, Cambridge, Canterbury, and many other cities, towns, and villages, were reduced to ashes, and the greatest part of their inhabitants buried in their ruins. St. Alphage, archbishop of Canterbury, with almost all his clergy, were murdered in cold blood. The open country was so insecure that agriculture was neglected, and a famine, no less destructive than the sword, ensued. All the fleets and armies that the wretched English raised for their own defence, were, by various stratagems, betrayed and ruined by the infamous Ædric and his accomplices. If they sometimes purchased a momentary quiet by large sums of money, this served only to accelerate their ruin, by weakening themselves and strengthening their enemies. In a word, Ethelred, despairing of being able to preserve his crown any longer, having sent his queen and two sons before him, retired into Normandy A. D. 1013; and about the end of that year the city of London opened her gates to the victorious Dane, when it might be said that England was completely conquered (18).

A. D. 978.  
to 1066.  
Miseries of  
the Eng-  
lish.

Swein, king of Denmark, did not live long to enjoy this important conquest, but dying suddenly at Gainfborough, February 3, A. D. 1014, before he was crowned, he is not commonly reckoned among the kings of England (19). This event revived the dejected spirits of the English, and inspired them with the resolution of attempting to deliver their country from the Danish yoke. In order to this, they sent a deputation into Normandy to invite king Ethelred to return into England, and resume the reins of government, promising him their most cheerful obedience and hearty support. The king complied with this invitation; and having sent his son prince Edward before him, to assure the nobility and people that he would avoid all the errors of his former administration, arrived in the time of Lent, and found a numerous army of his English subjects ready to receive and

Death of  
Swein king  
of Den-  
mark, and  
its conse-  
quences.

(18) Chron. Saxon. p. 133—144. W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 10. p. 39.

(19) W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 10. p. 40. Chron. Saxon. p. 144.

A. D. 978, obey his orders. Ethelred at his first arrival acted with uncommon spirit; and falling upon the Danes unexpectedly as they were plundering the country about Gainborough, killed great numbers of them, and obliged the rest, with their young king Canute, to retire to their ships, and put to sea. Canute, enraged at this defection of the English, having cruelly mutilated their hostages, and set them on shore at Sandwich, sailed away to take possession of his native kingdom (20).

Misconduct of king Ethelred, and treachery of Ædric Streon.

King Ethelred did not continue long to act in this commendable manner; but falling again under the influence of his brother-in-law, the infamous Ædric Streon, he was by him misguided, betrayed, and ruined. That horrid traitor, at an assembly of the nobility which met this year at Oxford, invited two of the most wealthy and potent earls, Sugfert and Morcar, to an entertainment, where they were cruelly murdered; and their attendants, after making an attempt to revenge their lords, took shelter in a church, where they were burnt to death. It soon appeared, that Ethelred was privy and consenting to all these base and barbarous proceedings, by confiscating the estates of these unhappy noblemen, and thrusting the young and beautiful widow of earl Sugfert into a monastery. That lady having, at a casual interview, captivated the heart of prince Edmund, the king's eldest son, he released her from her confinement, and married her without his father's consent (21). By these events, the peace of the royal family, and the confidence of the nobility in their king, and in one another, were destroyed, at a time when nothing but the most cordial union could have preserved them all from ruin.

War between Canute king of Denmark and the English.

Canute, king of Denmark, having settled the affairs of his hereditary dominions, returned about this time to assert his claim to the crown of England, and presently over-run Dorsetshire, Wiltshire, and Somersetshire. King Ethelred being then sick, his brother-in-law Ædric raised one army in Mercia, and his son prince Edmund another in the north: but when these two armies joined, the prince received intelligence, that the faithless Ædric had formed a plot against his liberty and life; which obliged him to retire with his forces without fighting

(20) Chron. Saxon. p. 144. W. Maimf. l. 2. c. 15.

(21) Chron. Saxon. p. 146.

the common enemy. Soon after this the traitor Ædric threw off the mask, and openly joined Canute with forty ships of the English navy, whose crews he had corrupted. Canute, strengthened by this accession, advanced into Warwickshire, having brought all the country behind him to submit to his authority. In the mean time, prince Edmund advanced with a body of troops which he had hastily collected; but when they found that they were not to be joined by the Londoners, who staid at home to defend their own city, they disbanded without fighting, in spite of all the commands and intreaties of their leader (22). The intrepid Edmund, not yet dispirited by all these disappointments, with incredible diligence raised a second army, which was joined by the king at the head of the Londoners; but that weak unfortunate prince was still surrounded with faithless friends, who infused into him such doubts and fears, of the fidelity of the English, that he could not be prevailed upon, by the most earnest intreaties of his heroic son, to continue in the army, but hastened back to London. The troops being thus abandoned by their King, could no longer be kept together, but disbanded a second time; which constrained the prince, with a few faithful followers, to retire into the north, and join his brother-in-law Uhtred earl of Northumberland. Canute pursued him in his retreat with a formidable army; which soon brought Uhtred to submission, and obliged Edmund to quit the field, and take shelter within the walls of London. Here he found his father king Ethelred at the point of death, who expired April 23, A. D. 1016, leaving his family and subjects in the most distressful circumstances (23).

The brave prince Edmund, eldest son of the deceased king, was immediately crowned at London, by Livignus archbishop of Canterbury, assisted by a very few of the English nobility and clergy, amidst the acclamations of the loyal Londoners. But the far greatest part of the English clergy and nobility attended Canute at Southampton, swore allegiance to him as their king, and abjured all the posterity of Ethelred (24). After these ceremonies, both these princes prepared to contend for the crown of

A. D. 978,  
to 1066.

(22) Chron. Saxon. p. 146, 147.

(23) Chron. Saxon. p. 146, 147. W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 10. R. Hoveden Annal. pars prior. Hen. Hunt. l. 6.

(24) R. Hoveden. Annal. pars prior. p. 249.

A. D. 978, England with such spirit and valour, as shewed that  
to 1066. neither of them was unworthy of the prize.

War between king  
Edmund  
and king  
Canute.

King Edmund, who from his hardiness in war had obtained the name of *Ironside*, immediately after his coronation hastened into Wessex, where he had considerable influence; and Canute, taking advantage of his absence, besieged London. But the bravery of the citizens baffled all his efforts; and Edmund having collected some forces, flew to their relief. This obliged Canute to raise the siege; and the two armies meeting at Gillingham in Dorsetshire, a battle was fought, in which the English gained some advantage. There never was a more active or bloody campaign in England than this in the year 1016: for in the course of it, Canute besieged London no less than three times, and was as often forced to raise the siege; and no fewer than five pitched battles were fought with prodigious obstinacy and great effusion of blood (25).

Pacific-  
ation be-  
tween the  
two kings,  
and death  
of king  
Edmund.

The nobility in both armies dreading the consequences of a quarrel, which was carried on with such uncommon fury, and seemed to threaten the total destruction of their country, prevailed upon the two kings to enter upon a treaty, when they were on the point of fighting a sixth battle. After a short negotiation, it was agreed to divide the kingdom between them, allotting to Canute the kingdoms of Mercia and Northumberland, which were chiefly inhabited by Danes, and to Edmund all the rest of England (26). The brave king Edmund did not many days survive this agreement, being murdered at Oxford, November 30, by the contrivance, as it was suspected, of the detestable traitor Ædric Streon (27).

The two  
sons of king  
Edmund  
preserved.

The two infant sons of the brave but unfortunate Edmund, Edwin and Edward, fell into the hands of Canute; who sent them to his friend the king of Sweden, with a request that they might not live to give him any trouble. Though the prince understood the meaning of this request, he was not so base as to comply with it, but caused the two royal victims to be conducted to the court of Solomon king of Hungary, with a request to preserve and educate them according to their birth. Here Edwin the eldest died young; and Edward having

(25) Chron. Saxon. p. 147—150.

(26) Id. ibid. W. Malms. l. 2. c. 10.

(27) Hen. Hunt. l. 6. p. 208.

married



married the princess Agatha, sister to the queen of Hungary, had one son and two daughters, of whom we shall hear afterwards (28). A. D. 978,  
to 1066.

After the death of their heroic king Edmund, the English made no further opposition, but quietly submitted to the government of Canute, who was acknowledged king of all England by all the great men both of the clergy and laity, in a general assembly held at London A. D. 1017. To give some colour of justice to the exclusion of Edmund's two sons and three brothers, it was affirmed by many of the members of this assembly (though falsely), that the succession of Canute to the whole kingdom, on the death of Edmund, had been stipulated in the late convention between these two princes (29). To secure the crown which he had thus acquired, Canute rewarded some of his most powerful followers, who had contributed most to his elevation, with the richest governments. Turkill, a great Danish chieftain, was made duke of East-Anglia; Yrice, another powerful nobleman of the same nation, was made duke of Northumberland; and the traitor Ædric was confirmed in the government of Mercia (30). To prevent any insurrection of the English in favour of Edwi, the full brother of the late king Edmund, who was so great a favourite with the common people that he was called the *Georls king*, he first procured the banishment, and afterwards the murder of that prince (31). Canute was also at much pains to extinguish national animosities, and bring about a thorough reconciliation between his Danish and English subjects, which he at length accomplished (32).

This politic prince, having, by these and the like arts, secured his new-acquired dominion, proceeded to do some very meritorious acts of justice. In the time of the late troubles, several of the English nobles had shamefully betrayed the cause of their king and country. While Canute needed the treason he cherished the traitors; but as soon as he found himself in the peaceable possession of the crown of England, he banished some,

Performs  
some meri-  
torious acts  
of justice.

(28) W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 10. sub fine. R. Hoveden, pars prior, p. 250.

(29) R. Hoveden. Annal. pars prior, p. 250.

(30) Chron. Saxon. p. 151. R. Hoveden. Annal. p. 250.

(31) Id. ibid. (32) W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 11.

A. D. 978, and put others of them to death, under various pretences (33). Nor was it long before the arch-traitor Ædric met with the fate which he had so often merited: for that shameless villain having one day in council upbraided king Canute with his great services, particularly with the murder of the late king Edmund, which had made way for him to ascend the throne of England, the ferocious Dane was so enraged at his presumption, that he commanded him instantly to be put to death, as having confessed himself guilty of murder and treason (34). About the same time he divested his two dangerous and powerful subjects, Turkill duke of East-Anglia, and Iric duke of Northumberland, of their estates and honours, and sent them into banishment; by which the whole kingdom was reduced to a state of perfect subjection to his authority (35). This enabled him to send back the greatest part of his fleet and army into Denmark, retaining only forty ships in England (36).

King Canute marries queen Emma.

Still further to gain the affections of his English subjects, and prevent their making any attempts in favour of the princes of their ancient royal family, Canute, being now a widower, made proposals of marriage to the queen-dowager Emma, widow of the late king Ethelred, who resided with her two sons by that king, Alfred and Edward, in the court of her brother Richard duke of Normandy. That princess, dazzled with the lustre of a crown which she had already worn, accepted of these proposals; and giving her hand to the great enemy of her family, once more ascended the throne of England, A. D. 1017 (37). By this marriage also, the artful Dane disarmed the resentment of Richard duke of Normandy, who had declared himself the protector of the two young princes Alfred and Edward, and threatened to attempt their restoration to the throne of their ancestors.

Canute's voyage into Denmark, and return into England.

By all these prudent measures, Canute, not unjustly called *the Great*, found himself so firmly seated on the throne of England, that he ventured, A. D. 1019, to make a voyage into his native kingdom of Denmark, which was then at war with Sweden, and carried with him a body of English troops, commanded by earl God-

(33) W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 11.

(34) H. ibid.

(35) Id. ib. c.

(36) H. ibid.

(37) Chron. Saxon. p. 151.

win. These troops soon met with a favourable opportunity of displaying their valour, and shewing their attachment to their new sovereign. Being stationed nearest to the enemy's camp, they assaulted it in the night, and gained a complete victory, without the least assistance from the Danes (38). This brave action greatly endeared the English in general to the king, and procured Godwin the highest marks of the royal favour, and laid the foundation of his future greatness (39). Having spent about a year in Denmark, and finished the war with Sweden, Canute returned into England A. D. 1020; and found every thing in the most profound tranquillity, which continued several years; and which he spent in making good laws, building churches and monasteries, and in other popular and pious works (40).

Canute made a prosperous expedition into Norway, A. D. 1028, with a fleet of fifty ships, and got possession of that kingdom, by expelling the good king Olaus, who had lost the affections of his subjects, by his imprudent zeal, and vain endeavours to restrain them from piracy (41).

A prince who was so great and prosperous, the sovereign of so many kingdoms, could not want flatterers; and some of his courtiers, it is said, carried their adulation so far as to declare in his presence, that nothing in nature dared to disobey his commands. To confound these pernicious sycophants, he ordered his chair to be placed upon the beach near Southampton, one day when the tide was coming in, and sitting down in it, commanded the waves, with an air of authority, to approach no nearer. But the rising billows, regardless of his commands, advanced with their usual rapidity, and obliged his majesty to retire; who turning to his flatterers, "Learn," said he, "from this example, the insignificance of all human power; and that the word of God alone is omnipotent (42)." A truth sufficiently obvious, but not much inculcated by monarchs in the circle of their flatterers.

A. D. 978,  
to 1066.



Canute  
conquers  
Norway.

Reproves  
the flattery  
of his courtiers.

(38) W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 11. Hen. Hunt. l. 6.

(39) Id. *ibid.*

(40) Chron. Saxon. p. 152. W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 11.

(41) Hen. Hunt. l. 6. R. d. Ducto ad an. 128. Chron. Mail. p. 155.

(42) Higden. p. 276. Anglia Sacra, vol. 1. p. 232.

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to 1066.

Canute's  
journey to  
Rome.

Though Canute was a wise and great prince, he was not superior to that wretched degrading superstition which reigned in that age of darkness in which he lived. Influenced chiefly by this, he made a journey to Rome, A. D. 1031, attended by a numerous and splendid train of his nobility, and lavished greater sums of money upon the churches and clergy in that city than any prince had ever done. In return for this pious liberality, he obtained some additional privileges to the English college at Rome,—a small abatement in the price of the palls of the English archbishops,—and, what he valued more than all the rest, a plenary pardon of all his sins, and the special friendship of St. Peter (43).

Canute's  
expedition  
into Cum-  
berland.

The kings of Scotland had constantly refused to pay the ignominious tax called *Danegelt* for the province of Cumberland, which they had received from the crown of England. Canute, determined no longer to admit of this refusal, after his return from Rome, raised an army, and marched into the north, A. D. 1031, in order to compel Malcolm king of Scots to pay that tax, or to deprive him of that province. But this quarrel was compromised without bloodshed, by Malcolm's resigning Cumberland to Duncan, his grandson and heir, who agreed to pay the demanded tribute (44).

Death of  
Canute,  
and ac-  
cession of  
Harold.

From this time Canute and all his kingdoms enjoyed a profound peace to the time of his death, which happened at Shaftsbury November 12, A. D. 1035 (45). He left two sons, named *Swein* and *Harold*, the former by a concubine, and the latter by his first wife; and one son, named *Hardicanute*, by queen Emma. This last prince should have succeeded to the crown of England, if the marriage-settlement of his royal parents had been observed; but being at a distance in Denmark (as Swein was in Norway) at his father's death, and Harold being then in England, he stepped into the vacant throne, and seized his father's treasures (46). He was supported in this attempt chiefly by the Danes in the north, and the citizens of London; while the English in general, with earl Godwin at their head, declared for Hardicanute, the son of Emma; and the nation was threatened with all

(43) Hen. Hunt. l. 6. W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 11.

(44) Fenton l. 4. c. 47.

(45) Chron. Saxon. p. 154.

(46) Hen. Hunt. l. 6. R. Hoveden. Annal. pars prior.



the horrors of a civil war. This, however, was prevented by a partition of the kingdom between the two brothers ; by which it was agreed, that Harold should keep possession of London, and all the country to the north of the Thames ; and that all to the south of that river should be ceded to Hardicanute ; whose share, till his arrival, should be governed by his mother queen Emma, who fixed her residence at Winchester (47). This princess, finding herself so agreeably seated, and possessed of so much power, invited Alfred and Edward, her two sons by king Ethelred, to come to her in England ; and these princes having lately lost their uncle and patron Robert Duke of Normandy, at whose court they had long resided, joyfully accepted of this invitation, and came over with a numerous retinue. This journey proved fatal to Alfred, the eldest and most active of these princes. For Harold, suspecting that Alfred designed to assert his right to the crown of England, earnestly wished to have him destroyed ; and in order to accomplish this, by the advice of earl Godwin (whom he had secretly gained to his interest), he invited him, with great appearance of cordiality, to his court. As the unhappy unsuspecting prince was on his way thither, he was intercepted and taken prisoner near Gilford, by earl Godwin and his followers, who put the greatest part of his attendants to death, with every circumstance of cruelty (48). The prince was carried first to Gillingham, where his eyes were put out, and afterwards confined in the monastery of Ely, where he died (49). As soon as queen Emma and prince Edward received intelligence of the deplorable fate of the unfortunate Alfred, they fled out of England ; the former to the court of Baldwin earl of Flanders, and the latter into Normandy ; and Harold took possession of the whole kingdom A. D. 1037. He did not, however, enjoy the fruits of his cruelty and ambition very long ; for he died April 14, A. D. 1039 (50). This prince was remarkable for his great agility, and swiftness in walking and running ; which procured him the surname of *Harefoot*, by which he is known in history.

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to 1066.

(47) Chron. Saxon. p. 154. Hen. Hunt. l. 6.

(48) R. Hoveden. Annal. Alured. Beverl. l. 8. p. 58.

(49) Id. ibid. Leland. Collectan. vol. 1. p. 241.

(50) Chron. Saxon. p. 155.

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to 1066.

Accession  
of Hardi-  
canute.

Hardicanute king of Denmark happened to be in Flanders on a visit to his mother queen Emma, when he received the news of Harold's death, and an invitation from the nobility of England to come and take possession of that kingdom (51). He joyfully complied with this invitation; and arriving at Sandwich a few days before Midsummer, in a fleet of forty ships, was received with the loudest acclamations by people of all ranks (52). This joy was not of long duration: for the English soon found that their new king was a ferocious and arbitrary prince, who made his own violent passions, and not the laws of reason or of his country, the rule of his administration. His rage against his predecessor Harold was so implacable, that he commanded his body to be taken out of the grave, first beheaded, and then thrown into the Thames; and the great earl Godwin, if we may believe some of our ancient historians, was so mean-spirited as to assist the common hangman in executing these commands (53). This mighty earl, who was unquestionably the greatest and most powerful subject that ever England beheld, besides these humbling compliances with the tyrant's will, was obliged to employ the intercession of all his friends, and the most valuable bribes, to obliterate the remembrance of the part he had acted under the former reign; particularly in the affair of prince Alfred's murder. One of these bribes discovers Godwin's ingenuity, as well as his great wealth. It was a galley of admirable workmanship, and beautifully gilded, with a crew of eighty of the handsomest young men, magnificently dressed, each of them having on each arm a bracelet of gold, weighing sixteen ounces; while all their swords, lances, battle-axes, helmets, and shields, glittered with gold and silver (54).

Destruction  
of  
Worcester,  
and death  
of Hardi-  
canute.

Hardicanute forfeited his popularity soon after his accession, by imposing a heavy tax for the payment of his Danish fleet and army; which became still more odious by the rigorous manner in which it was collected, and a grievous famine which raged at the same time (55). The people of Worcester having killed two of the collectors

(51) R. Hoveden. Annal.

(52) Id. *ibid.* Chron. Saxon p. 156.

(53) R. Hoveden. Annal. pars prior, p. 251.

(54) Id. *ibid.*

(55) Chron. Saxon. p. 159.

of this tax, in a popular tumult, this tyrant was so enraged, that he gave orders to the earls Leofric, Seward, and Godwin, to destroy that city, and exterminate the inhabitants. The first part of these orders was executed; but the people having got some previous notice, made their escape into an island in the Severn, from whence they afterwards returned, and rebuilt their city (56). Prince Edward, the only surviving son of king Ethelred and queen Emma, arrived in England from Normandy A. D. 1040, and was kindly received by his uterine brother Hardicanute (57). Though this king was naturally robust and hardy, as his name imports, he abandoned himself to such excesses in eating and drinking, as impaired his health and hastened his death, which happened at Lambeth, June 8, A. D. 1041, when he was carousing at the wedding of a Danish nobleman (58).

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to 1066.

The violences of Harold and Hardicanute had rendered the Danish government so disagreeable to the English, that they were transported with joy at the sudden death of this last prince, and unanimously determined to restore the line of their own ancient princes. Edward, surnamed *the Exile*, the son of king Edmund Ironside, was the undoubted heir of that line; but having resided from his infancy in the court of Hungary, he was at so great a distance, and so little known in England, that he was hardly ever thought of on this occasion; and all men turned their eyes on Edward, the son of king Ethelred and queen Emma, who was then in the kingdom. This prince, naturally timid and unambitious, dreading a violent opposition from the Danes, was struck with terror, and meditated an escape into Normandy; when the great earl Godwin espoused his cause, and engaged to raise him to the throne, on condition that he married his daughter, and protected him and his family in the possession of all their estates and honours (59). Edward having agreed to these conditions, was acknowledged as king in an assembly of the states at Gillingham, chiefly through the great eloquence, power, and interest of earl Godwin (60). The kingdom was so much afflicted at this time by a great famine, and mortality

Accession  
of Edward  
the Con-  
fessor.

(56) R. Hoveden Annal. Simon Dunelm. p. 181.

(57) Chron. Saxon.

(58) Id. ibid. Hoveden. Annal.

(59) W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 13.

(60) Id. ibid.

A. D. 978, both of men and cattle, that the king's coronation was delayed till the year after, when it was performed at Winchester on Easter-day, by Eadfig archbishop of Canterbury (61).

**Hokeday.** The English, in their first transports of joy at seeing a prince of their ancient royal family on the throne, were guilty of some outrages against the Danes, which obliged some of them to abandon the country; but as the bulk of that nation quietly submitted to a revolution which they could not prevent, it was attended with very little bloodshed (62). The remembrance of this revolution was long preserved in England, by an anniversary festival called *Hokeday*, on which the common people assembled in great crowds, and acted a representation of the insults and indignities which the Danes suffered on this occasion (63).

**Edward enriches the crown.** Edward, at his accession, finding the crown much impoverished by the profuse grants of the late kings, made a general revocation of these grants; by which he obtained a great accession both of wealth and power (64). This was indeed a severe blow to many families; but as it fell chiefly upon the Danes, they meet with little pity, and no redress. He also filled his coffers, and increased his revenues, by seizing the treasures, and confiscating the estates, of his mother queen Emma, who, he pretended, had treated him very unkindly in his adversity (65). These methods of enriching the crown, however exceptionable in themselves, became popular, by enabling Edward to take off the odious and ignominious tax called *Danegelt*, under which the English had groaned so long.

**Edward's marriage** Edward fulfilled his engagements to earl Godwin, by marrying his daughter Edgitha, A. D. 1043 (66). But though this lady was one of the most amiable and accomplished of her sex both in mind and person, it was an unhappy and unfruitful marriage, owing, if we may believe our monkish historians, to a vow of chastity which the king had made; for which he is highly com-

(61) W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 13.

(62) Id. ibid.

(63) Spelman. Gloss. p. 294.

(64) Leges Edward. Contell. c. 16.

(65) Anglia Sacra, vol. 1. p. 236. W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 13.

(66) Chron. Saxon. p. 157.



mended by those writers, esteemed a saint, and surnamed *A. D. 978, to 1066.*  
*the Confessor* (67).

It was in some respects a misfortune, and the occasion of no little trouble both to Edward and his subjects, that he had been educated, and had spent his youthful years abroad, in the court of Normandy, where he had contracted many friendships, and received many favours. It was natural for the companions of his youth to come over, to congratulate him on his exaltation to the throne of England, in hopes of sharing with him in his prosperity, as they had assisted him in his adversity. In these expectations they were not mistaken: the grateful monarch received them kindly, loaded them with favours, and advanced some of them to the most honourable stations both in church and state. The court of England in a little time was crowded with Normans; who, basking in the sunshine of royal favour, did not behave with that modesty and self-denial which prudence would have dictated. In particular, one Robert, a Norman monk, a man of learning and abilities, became the declared favourite of Edward, and was raised by him to the see of Canterbury, and the chief direction of all affairs (68). It is easy to imagine, that this state of things was not very agreeable to the English nobles in general. But earl Godwin, who thought himself intitled to the first place in the favour and confidence of his sovereign and son-in-law, was enraged beyond measure at the archbishop and other foreign favourites.

Normans promoted by Edward.

An incident happened A. D. 1050, which blew up these secret discontents into an open flame. Eustace earl of Bologne, who had married Goda, king Edward's sister, paid a visit to his brother-in-law the king of England; and having finished his business, set out on his return home in September this year (69). When he arrived at Dover, a quarrel arose between the townsmen and his retinue, about their lodgings, in which twenty of the townsmen and nineteen of the earl's people were killed, and many wounded on both sides. Eustace, having made his escape, with a few followers, hastened back to court, and gave the king a very unfair repre-

Earl Godwin and his sons banished,

(67) Ingulf. Hist. W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 13. Anglia Sacra, vol. 1. p. 141.

(68) Id. ibid. Hen. Hunt. l. 6.

(69) W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 13.

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to 1066.

sentation of what had happened, laying the whole blame on the people of Dover, and demanding satisfaction (70). Edward, believing this representation, was greatly incensed at the people of Dover, and in a fit of passion commanded earl Godwin to raise an army, and inflict exemplary vengeance on that town (71). The earl, unwilling to be the destroyer of those whom it was his duty to protect, declined executing this rigorous and unjust command; and proposed that the people of Dover should be heard before they were punished. This refusal threw the king into a more violent passion; which Godwin disregarded, and retired from court, to prosecute another business, which he imagined was of more importance (72). The Welsh, about this time, had made incursions into Herefordshire (of which Swain, earl Godwin's eldest son, was governor), and built a fort in it, from which they plundered the country. Godwin and his sons raised an army to expel these invaders, and destroy their fort. The king in the mean time held a great council of the nobility at Gloucester; where he was attended by the earls Seward, Leofric, and the other northern chieftains, with their numerous followers; and having been persuaded by the Welsh and his foreign favourites, that the army raised by Godwin and his sons was designed to act against himself, he laboured earnestly to prevail upon the nobility to assist him with their forces in destroying the Godwin family. Earl Godwin and his sons being informed of these hostile intentions of the king, determined, though with reluctance, to stand upon their defence, and repel force by force, if they were attacked (73). The English nobility about the king advised him not to push matters to extremity, but to call another great council to meet at London in September to determine all these differences (74). All the nobility of the south and north of England attended this council, with their followers, which made a great army. Earl Godwin and his sons being summoned to appear before this assembly, to answer for their late conduct, demanded hostages to be given them for the safety of their persons; which were denied. The council then proceeded to judge them in their absence,

(70) Chron. Saxon. p. 163.

(72) W. Malm. l. 2. c. 13.

(74) Id. *ibid.*

(71) Id. *ibid.*

(73) Id. *ibid.*

outlawed Swain, the eldest son of Godwin, and condemned that earl and his other sons to surrender themselves, or depart the kingdom in five days. These unfortunate noblemen chose rather to abandon their country, than trust their persons in the hands of their enemies. Godwin, with his three sons, Swain, Gurth, and Tosti, took shelter in the court of Baldwin earl of Flanders, whose daughter Tosti had married; and Harold and Leofwin, his two other sons, retired into Ireland (75). Even the fair and innocent Edgitha, though partner of the throne and bed of Edward, was involved in the ruin of her family, being stripped of every thing by her ungenerous husband, and thrust into a monastery (76). All the immense possessions of Godwin and his sons were confiscated, their places of power and trust bestowed upon others, chiefly on the Norman favourites; and the greatness of this mighty family, so late the envy of their fellow-subjects, and terror of their sovereign, seemed to be quite subverted, and laid in ruins (77).

A. D. 978,  
to 1066.

Soon after the banishment of earl Godwin and his sons, when the Norman interest was triumphant at the court of England, William duke of Normandy paid a visit to his cousin king Edward; from whom he received the most honourable entertainment, and many rich presents, in return for the generous protection and support which the duke's family had given him in his adversity. It was in this visit that Robert the Norman, archbishop of Canterbury, is said to have given William the first hint of Edward's intention of making him his successor; an intention which was probably suggested by that prelate (78).

William  
duke of  
Norman-  
dy visits  
England.

Though earl Godwin and his sons had been obliged to yield to the torrent, and forsake their country, they were men of too much spirit to sit down quietly, without attempting to revenge the injuries, and repair the losses which they had suffered. They had still many friends and much treasure, with which they soon procured a fleet in the ports of Flanders, and put to sea in the beginning of summer A. D. 1052, in order to invade England. As Edward had expected this, he had provided a superior fleet, with which he prevented their

The God-  
win fami-  
ly restored.

(75) Chron. Saxon. p. 164

(77) Chron. Saxon. p. 164.

(76) W. Malmf.

(78) Wau Hist. con. p. 448.

landing

A. D. 978, landing in England, and obliged them to put back to  
 to 1066. Flanders. The royal fleet then returned to Sandwich; and the two Norman earls, Ralph and Oddo, who commanded it, imagining that no further attempts would be made that year, laid up their ships and dismissed their sailors. As soon as Godwin received intelligence of this, he put to sea; and being joined near the isle of Wight by his son Harold, with a fleet of nine ships from Ireland, they entered all the harbours on the coast, raised heavy contributions, and pressed all the ships and sailors into their service. By these means, having collected a great fleet and army, they entered the river Thames, and boldly approached London, where the king lay with his army. Edward, instigated by his Norman confidants, for some time stood firm, and seemed determined to risk a battle; but the English nobility interposing, a negotiation was set on foot, which soon terminated in a peace, on these conditions:—That earl Godwin, his sons, and followers, should be restored to all their estates and honours, and should give hostages to the king for their future loyalty;—and that the Norman favourites, who had been the occasion of all these troubles, should leave the kingdom. This peace was confirmed the day after in a great council held at London; in which earl Godwin and his sons were declared innocent of the crimes with which they had been charged, and publicly received into the king's favour. At the same time queen Edgitha was restored to her liberty and former rank (79). The obnoxious Normans made their escape with great secrecy and precipitation, for fear of being torn in pieces by the populace.

Earl Godwin's death.

The great earl Godwin did not long survive to enjoy this happy change in the circumstances of his affairs and family. He died suddenly April 15, A. D. 1053, as he was sitting at table with the king; and was succeeded in his honours and great offices by his eldest surviving son Harold; besides whom, he left, by his only wife the lady Githa, daughter of Canute the Great, four other sons, all possessed of many estates and dignities (80).

Ambition of Harold.

Harold, now at the head of the Godwin family, was not inferior to his father in power and wealth, and supe-

(79) Chron. Saxon. p. 165—168. R. Hoveden. Annal. Higden, p. 279. Alured Beverlien, l. 8.

(80) Chron. Saxon. p. 168. See Biographia Britannica, art. Godwin.



rior to him in virtue and abilities. Beholding the throne filled by a childless prince, in the decline of life, without any one in the kingdom who had any pretensions to succeed him, the true heir at a great distance, and almost quite forgotten, he soon began to cast ambitious eyes on the crown; and to secure the succession to it became the great object of all his designs and actions (81). He paid great court to Edward, in hopes of engaging him to appoint him his successor; he laboured earnestly to add to the number of his friends, and increase his treasures, sometimes by means not very honourable (82). He gained great credit soon after his father's death by a successful expedition into Wales (83). Some events happened not long after, which seemed to favour the views and encourage the hopes of Harold. Seward earl of Northumberland, and Leofric earl of Mercia, who were the most powerful noblemen in England, and might have formed a dangerous opposition to his elevation to the throne, were both removed by death A. D. 1055, and Harold obtained the earldom of Northumberland for his brother Tosti, and that of East-Anglia for himself; by which means about two thirds of all England came under the dominion of his family (84).

Though Edward was not ignorant of the ambitious views of Harold, and did not favour them; yet he knew not how to take any effectual measures for their disappointment. Sometimes he inclined to nominate William duke of Normandy his successor, as one who would be most able to dispute the throne with Harold. At other times he was disposed to recall his nephew prince Edward, son of king Edmund Ironside, whose title was unquestionable, in hopes that the English would unite in supporting the line of their ancient kings. After much balancing, he embraced this last measure as most just and honourable, and dispatched Aldred bishop of Worcester to the court of Hungary, to conduct Edward and his family into England. That unfortunate prince arrived in his native country A. D. 1057, after he had lived about forty years in exile, and died within less than a month after his arrival; leaving an infant son, named *Edgar Atheling*; and two daughters, Margaret, after-

A. D. 978,  
to 1066.

Prince  
Edward  
comes  
from Hun-  
gary into  
England,  
and dies  
soon after.

(81) Ingulf. Hist. (82) Hen. Hunt. l. 6. (83) Sim. Dunelm.  
(84) Chron. Saxon. p. 169. Hen. Hunt. l. 6.

A. D 978, wards queen of Scotland, and Christina, who became a  
 to 1066. nun (85). The hopes of Harold, which had been a little  
 damped by the arrival of prince Edward, were revived again by his death, and the tender age and unpromising genius of his son.

Voyage of  
 earl Har-  
 old into  
 Norman-  
 dy.

There was one obstacle in Harold's way to the throne which it seemed difficult to remove. Ulnoth, one of his brothers, and a nephew named *Haquin*, had been given to Edward as hostages at the late pacification, who had sent them to William duke of Normandy, where they were still detained (86). Harold often importuned the king for the release of these precious pledges; and at last obtained a commission, according to some of our historians, to make a voyage into Normandy to procure their freedom; though other historians assign other reasons for this voyage (87). However this may be, he set out with a numerous and splendid retinue; and after meeting with some disasters, arrived at the court of Normandy. William was not ignorant of the mighty power of Harold, and strongly suspected his ambitious views; and was therefore in some doubt whether he should destroy him as a rival, or gain him for a friend. Embracing this last counsel, he entertained him in the most friendly manner, made him many valuable presents, and still greater promises, if he would assist him in mounting the throne of England on the demise of Edward. Harold, seeing himself in the hands of his rival, promised every thing that was desired, and even confirmed his promises with the most solemn oaths. William, to attach him still more firmly to his interests, engaged to load him with additional honours, and to give him his own daughter in marriage. At his departure, he gave him up the youngest of the hostages, and promised to send the other (88). This is the most plausible account of this strange affair; but it must be confessed, that it is far from being satisfactory; and there seems to be some secret in this transaction, which none of our historians have penetrated. One thing, however, is certain, that Harold was no sooner out of William's reach, than he totally disregarded all his promises and oaths, and pro-

(85) Chron. Saxon. p. 169. W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 13.

(86) Id. ibid.

(87) W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 13. Hoveden. Annal. Brompt. p. 947.  
 Higden, l. 6. Hen. Hunt. l. 6.

(88) Id. ibid.

ceeded with redoubled ardour to secure his own succession to the throne of England. A. D. 978,  
to 1006.

The Welsh having renewed their incursions A. D. 1064, under their enterprising prince Griffith, Harold, in conjunction with his brother Tosti, earl of Northumberland, invaded Wales both by sea and land. This invasion was planned with so much prudence, and prosecuted with so much vigour, that the Welsh, to preserve themselves from that destruction with which they were threatened, seized their own prince, who had been the occasion of the war, cut off his head, and sent it to Harold, with an offer to submit to the government of any person he should think proper to appoint (89). By this action, so honourable and advantageous to his country, Harold's reputation and popularity were very much increased. Expedition of earl Harold into Wales.

Though Tosti, earl of Northumberland, had done good service in the late expedition into Wales, and on some other occasions, he was a man of violent passions, and had been guilty of many acts of cruelty and oppression in his government; and the Northumbrians, finding no end or redress of their grievances, broke out into open rebellion against him, killed about two hundred of his retainers, the instruments of his oppressions, seized his treasures, and drove him out of their country A. D. 1064. The expelled earl hastened to the king, and made loud complaints of the injury which he had received; and Edward, too hastily believing the justice of these complaints, commanded Harold to raise an army, restore his brother to his government, and punish the Northumbrians, who had chosen Morcar, the son of Alfgar duke of Mercia, for their earl. When Harold approached the borders of Northumberland with his army, he was met by a deputation from the insurgents, who gave him a detail of the many cruelties and oppressions of which their late earl had been guilty; and represented in a firm tone, that though they were willing to submit to legal government, they were determined to die with their swords in their hands, rather than suffer his restoration. Harold convinced of the justice of their representations, abandoned his brother's cause, prevailed with the king

(89) Chron. Saxon. p. 170. W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 13. Hen. Hunt. l. 6.

A. D. 978,  
to 1066.

to pardon the Northumbrians, and confirm Morcar in the earldom. Tofti, despairing of his restoration to his government, and enraged beyond measure at the conduct of his brother Harold, retired to the court of Baldwin earl of Flanders, his father-in-law (90).

Harold  
married.

Harold, soon after this transaction, procured the government of Mercia for Edwin, earl Morcar's brother, and also married Edgiva, the sister of these two noblemen. By these just and prudent measures, he gained the hearts of the people of Mercia and Northumberland, and attached the two powerful earls Edwin and Morcar most firmly to his interest (91).

Death of  
Edward  
the Con-  
fessor, and  
accession  
of Harold.

When Harold was thus in the zenith of his power and popularity, the throne became vacant by the death of Edward the Confessor, January 5, A. D. 1066. On the very next day he was buried with great solemnity, in his new church of St. Peter's, Westminster, all the members of a great council which he had summoned for the dedication of that church attending his funeral (92). On that same busy day, earl Harold was crowned king of England in St. Paul's, by Aldred archbishop of York, with as much quiet and unanimity, as if his title to the crown had been as clear and indisputable as it was defective (93). He alledged indeed, that the late king had appointed him his successor; but of this he was never able to produce sufficient evidence (94). The truth is, that Harold owed his elevation to the throne to his own great power and wealth, his intimate connections with the chief nobility, the favour of the clergy, the love of the citizens of London and his general popularity. This popularity was so great, that though Edgar Atheling, the undoubted heir of the crown, was on the spot, his name was hardly mentioned on this occasion. (95).

His endeavours to  
preserve  
his crown.

Harold endeavoured to secure his crown by the same popular arts by which he had obtained it; and his administration is acknowledged to have been wise, and

(90) Chron. Saxon. p. 171. W. Malmf. l. c. 13. Hen. Hunt. l. 6.

(91) Order. Vitalis, p. 492.

(92) Chron. Saxon. p. 171. W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 13. Hen. Hunt. l. 6. Hoveden. Annal. Ingulf. Hist. (93) Id. Ibid.

(94) Hoveden. Annal. Alured. Beverl. l. 8. p. 122.

(95) Chron. Saxon. p. 172. W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 13. sub fine.



just, and gracious (96). He was not so weak as to expect the peaceable enjoyment of the glittering prize which he had obtained; for though he seems to have been under no apprehensions from the young, weak, and friendless Edgar, he was not so easy with respect to his own brother Tosti, and the duke of Normandy, knowing the implacable resentment of the one, and the power and ambition of the other. It was therefore one of his first cares to provide a fleet and army to defend himself against these dangerous enemies. It was not long before ambassadors arrived from the duke of Normandy, who reproached Harold, in their master's name, for the breach of his oath; and required him, in a peremptory tone, to descend from that throne which he had usurped. To which Harold returned this firm and prudent answer, 'That his oath was both unlawful and involuntary, and therefore not binding; and that he was determined to defend the throne to which he had been raised by the unanimous suffrage of the nobility, clergy, and people (97). William, on receiving this answer, hastened his preparations for an invasion of England, in order to obtain by force what he could not obtain by negotiation.

A. D. 978,  
to 1066.

The banished earl of Northumberland was almost frantic with rage and envy when he heard of his brother's elevation to the throne of England. He flew to the duke of Normandy, who had married Matilda, his wife's sister, and urged him to hasten his preparations for pulling down their common enemy (98). He sent messengers into Denmark and Norway, to rouse the piratical adventurers of those countries to renew their incursions; and impatient to be in action, he collected a small fleet in the ports of Flanders, with which he sailed towards England about the beginning of May, and attempted to make descents on several parts of the coasts, but was every where repulsed with loss (99). Upon this ill success, being deserted by many of his sailors, he retired into Scotland, and earnestly solicited Malcolm king of Scots to espouse his quarrel; but in

Attempts  
to de-  
thron-  
Harold de-  
feated.

(96) Alured. B-verl. l. 2. p. 122. W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 13.

(97) Id. ibid. l. 3. Ingulf. Hist.

(98) Order. Vital. p. 492.

(99) Chron. Saxon. p. 172. W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 13. Hoveden.

A. D. 978, to 1066. vain (100). His messengers had been more successful in Norway, and had engaged Harold Harfagar, king of that country, to invade England with his whole force; and that prince approaching the Northumbrian coast about the beginning of September, with a fleet of three hundred ships, was joined by Tosti with his fleet from Scotland. These two commanders entered the Humber, landed their forces, and advanced towards York; near which city they were encountered, September 19, by the two earls Edwin and Morcar. The conflict was at first bloody, and the victory for some time doubtful; but at length the earls were defeated, and the city of York surrendered to the conquerors. But their triumph was of very short duration; for king Harold having received intelligence of this invasion, marched his army with great expedition into the north, and came up with the enemy September 24, near Stanford-bridge; where he obtained a complete victory, killed both earl Tosti and the king of Norway, cut almost their whole army in pieces, took all their spoils, and suffered only twenty ships of their whole fleet to escape (101).

Landing  
of Wil-  
liam duke  
of Nor-  
mandy.

By this great victory, Harold was delivered from two of his most dangerous enemies, crowned with laurels, and loaded with spoils. But this year (the most important and eventful in the annals of England) was big with the most sudden and mighty reverses of fortune that are to be found in history. While Harold was celebrating his victory at York, he received intelligence, that William duke of Normandy had landed at Pevensey in Sussex, on September 25, at the head of an army of 60,000 men; which soon after deprived him of his crown and life, and brought about another great revolution, which will be the subject of the third book of this work (102).

IT is now necessary to give a very brief deduction of the civil and military affairs of Wales and Scotland, from A. D. 978, to 1066.

(100) Chron. Saxon. p. 172. W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 13. Hoveden. Annal.

(101) Hoveden. Annal. Chron. Saxon. p. 172. W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 13.

(102) Chron. Saxon. p. 172. W. Malmf. l. 3. Hen. Hunt. l. 7.

(103) Powel, Hist. Wales, p. 65.

At the beginning of this period, Owen ap Howel A. D. 978, Dha was prince of South Wales, and Howel ap Iwaf prince of North Wales (103). Encon, the eldest son of Owen, who was an excellent prince, lost his life A. D. 983, in attempting to suppress an insurrection in Guentland, leaving two sons, Edwin and Theodore; and the year after, Howel was slain in making an incursion into England, and succeeded by his brother Cadwallon in the principality of North Wales (104.) Cadwallon defeated and killed his cousin Ionaual, the son of his eldest brother Meyric, and right heir to the principality; but was himself defeated and slain the year after by Meredith ap Owen, who thereby got possession of North Wales. Owen prince of South Wales dying A. D. 987, his youngest son Meredith, who had conquered North Wales, seized also South Wales, excluding his two nephews, Edwin and Theodore, the sons of his elder brother Eneon. As Meredith was an usurper of North Wales from Edwal ap Meyric, and of South Wales from Edwin ap Encon, his reign was one continued scene of war and confusion; and the Danes taking advantage of these intestine broils, obliged him to pay a tribute of one penny for every man in Wales (105), which was called *the tribute of the black army* (106). Meredith, after a turbulent and unhappy reign, died A. D. 998, leaving only one daughter, named *Angkharad*, who married Lhwelyn ap Sitsylht, a nobleman descended by his mother from the ancient princes of North Wales.

The death of prince Meredith without male issue, and the infancy of Iago, the son of Edwal, occasioned fresh disputes about the succession. At length an adventurer, named *Acdan ap Blegored*, whose birth was so obscure, that even the Welsh genealogists cannot inform us who was his grandfather, triumphed over all his rivals, and became prince of North Wales A. D. 1003, and kept possession of it to A. D. 1015, when he was slain in battle with his four sons, by Lhwelyn ap Sitsylht (107). Wales enjoyed great prosperity under the government of Lhwelyn. “The earth brought forth  
“double; the people prospered in all their affairs, and  
“multiplied wonderfully; the cattle increased in great  
“number; so that there was neither beggar nor poor

(103) Powel, Hist. Wales, p. 65.

(104) Id. p. 67.

(105) Id. p. 70.

(106) Ibid. p. 71.

(107) Id. p. 83.

A. D. 978, "man from the south to the north sea (108)." This prince was slain in battle A. D. 1021, by Howel ap Edwin ap Eneon ap Owen ap Howel Dha, the right heir of the principality of South Wales. Though Llewelyn left a son named *Gryffyth*, he was succeeded in the government of North Wales by Iago ap Edwal ap Meyric ap Edwal Voel, the right heir of that principality (109). The government of South Wales was long disputed between Howel, the right heir, and an usurper named *Rytherch ap Iestyn*, who fell in battle A. D. 1032; by which Howel obtained possession of the territories of his ancestors (110). *Gryffyth*, the son of Llewelyn late prince of North Wales, was very young when his father was killed; but as soon as he arrived at the manly age, he collected an army of adventurers, and the friends of his family, A. D. 1037; with which he defeated and killed Iago ap Edwal, and got possession of North Wales; to which he soon after added South Wales, by the expulsion of its prince Howel (111). This *Gryffyth* ap Llewelyn prince of all Wales was one of the bravest princes that ever reigned in that country. He not only defended his own dominions against all his enemies with undaunted courage, but he made frequent incursions into England. In one of these, A. D. 1055, he first plundered, and then burnt Hereford, and carried away many captives and much spoil (112). At length the inroads of this bold invader became so frequent and destructive, that Harold, who aspired to the crown of England, thought he could do nothing more popular than to put an effectual stop to them; which he accomplished in the manner above related (113). After the death of *Gryffyth*, king Edward, to whom the Welsh had yielded the nomination of their prince, appointed Blethyn and Rywalhan, the sons of the princess Angharat, and uterine brothers to *Gryffyth*, to be governors or princes of North Wales; while Meredyth ap Owen ap Edwin was, by the same authority, appointed prince of South Wales; and these three were princes of Wales when William duke of Normandy landed with his army in England, A. D. 1066 (114).

(108) Powel, Hist. Wales, p. 95.

(109) Id. p. 87.

(110) Id. ibid.

(111) Id. p. 91.

(112) Id. p. 979. Simon Dunelm. R. Hoveden. Annal.

(113) See p. 95.

(114) Powel's H.R. p. 103.



It cannot be denied by any unprejudiced friend of A. D. 978, truth, that the history of Scotland, in this period, is very dark and doubtful;—that many of the narratives of its modern writers are not supported by sufficient evidence, and will hardly bear a critical investigation. This darkness and uncertainty is owing to various causes; but chiefly to the loss of records, chronicles, and other historical monuments in the long and cruel wars between the Scotch and English in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and to the too hasty destruction of monasteries, and their libraries, at the Reformation (115). A few fragments, which bear the marks of genuine antiquity, have escaped the general wreck, and yield a little light, which becomes gradually more clear as we approach the conclusion of this period (116).

to 1056.  
History of  
Scotland.

Though Kenneth II. at his death, A. D. 994, left a son named *Malcolm*, prince of Cumberland, he was succeeded in the throne of Scotland by *Constantine*, the son of *Culen*, his immediate predecessor, according to the frequent custom of those times (117). This was the occasion of a civil war between *Malcolm* and *Constantine*; in the course of which the latter was slain in a battle which was fought at *Cramond* A. D. 996 (118).


But *Malcolm*, who was not present in this battle, did not reap any advantage from this victory. For *Grime*, the son of the late king *Duff*, collecting the scattered remains of *Constantine's* army, hastened to *Scone*, and was there advanced to the throne by his followers. *Malcolm*, who was then in *Cumberland*, was much provoked at this second exclusion from his father's throne, and prosecuted the war with so much fury, that the unhappy country was threatened with destruction. To prevent this, *Fothad*, a pious and much respected bishop, interposed, and laboured to bring about a peace; which he at length accomplished on these terms: "That *Grime* should enjoy the kingdom for his life; and " that *Malcolm* should succeed him; and that from " thenceforward the rule of succession established by the " late king *Kenneth*, viz. that a father should be succeeded by his son, rather than by his nephew, should be " inviolably observed (119)." After this peace had conti-

(115) See Innes's Critical Essays, p. 552—586.

(116) Id. in Append.

(117) *Forlun*, l. 4. c. 34. *Chron. Mailros*. A. D. 994.

(118) Id. *ibid.* *Buchan*, l. 6. (119) Id. *ibid.*

A. D. 978, <sup>to 1006</sup>  nued about eight years, the war was rekindled: and Grime being mortally wounded in a battle on Ascension-day A. D. 1004, died the day after, and was succeeded by Malcolm, with the consent of all parties (120).

Malcolm II. while he was prince of Cumberland, never would consent to pay the ignominious tax of Danegelt, which involved him in continual quarrels with the Danes. They even pursued him into his new dominions, after his accession to the throne of Scotland; but were defeated by an army commanded by his grandson Duncan. Provoked at this defeat, they infested the coasts of Scotland for some years with frequent descents, fought several battles, with various success, and at length gained some footing in the countries of Moray and Buchan; but were soon after forced to evacuate these countries, with a promise never to return (121). After the departure of these unwelcome guests, Scotland enjoyed a profound peace for about twenty years: a thing not very common in those turbulent unsettled times.

Fabulous story. King Malcolm II. if we may believe some historians, was a prince of the most unbounded liberality, and gave away all the crown-lands to his nobility as a reward for their bravery against the Danes; reserving no property to himself and his successors but the Mute-hill of Scone (122). But this is both incredible in itself, and contradicted by the subsequent narrations of these very writers, who tell us of bishoprics erected, monasteries built, and endowed with many lands, by this king (after he is supposed to have denuded himself of all his possessions), and by his immediate successors. Malcolm was surpris'd and slain by some conspirators in the castle of Glamis, A. D. 1034, in the eightieth year of his life, and the thirtieth of his reign (123).

Duncan. Duncan prince of Cumberland, son to Beatrix, the eldest daughter of king Malcolm, and Crynyn Abthane of the Isles, succeeded his grandfather in the throne of Scotland. The beginning of this prince's reign was disturbed by an insurrection, raised chiefly by one Macdowal a powerful chieftain of the western isles, assisted by many adventurers from Ireland, and the neighbour-

(120) Buchan. l. 6. Fordun. l. 4. c. 40.

(121) Boet. l. 2. Buchan. l. 6.

(122) See Maitland's Hist. Scot. vol. 1. p. 319. Fordun. l. 4. c. 43.

(123) Id. *Ibid.* l. 4. c. 41.

ing coasts of Scotland, where they committed great ravages. But these insurgents were defeated, and almost all cut in pieces, by Bancho thane of Lochaber, and Macbeth the king's cousin, son to Doaca, the late king Malcolm's youngest daughter, and Finle thane of Angus (124). Soon after the suppression of this insurrection, Swein king of Norway invaded Scotland with a great fleet and army, and defeated Duncan in a bloody battle near Culrofs, who retired with the remains of his army to Perth; which was immediately invested by the victors. The Scots, being hard pressed, proposed an accommodation; and while the conditions of it were negotiating, sent a present of provisions, and great quantities of liquors, to the king of Norway and his army. This proved to them, as it was intended, a fatal present: for drinking plentifully, according to their custom, they were not only intoxicated, but thrown into a profound sleep, by the somniferous quality of the liquor, in which nightshade had been infused. When the Norwegians were in this condition, the Scots sallied out, cut the greatest part of them in pieces; and king Swein being carried to his ships in a state of insensibility, by some of his attendants, was preserved with great difficulty (125). It must, however, be confessed, that Fordun, the most ancient Scotch historian, makes no mention, either of the above rebellion or invasion; but expressly affirms, that Scotland enjoyed a profound peace, both from foreign and domestic enemies, during the whole reign of king Duncan (126). However this may be, it is universally acknowledged, that Duncan was a just and good prince, but of too mild and gentle a spirit for the times in which he lived. This encouraged his bold ambitious cousin Macbeth to form a plot for depriving him of his crown and life; which he executed at Inverness, A. D. 1040; and was immediately after crowned king of Scotland by his followers, to the exclusion of Malcolm Canmore prince of Cumberland, and Donald Bane, the two sons of the murdered king (127).

These two young princes, having heard of their father's death, raised some forces to avenge his murder, and assert their own rights; but finding themselves too weak

A. D. 978,  
to 1066.

(124) Buchanan, l. 7. (125) Boet. l. 2. Buchan. l. 7.

(126) Fordun, l. 4. c. 44.

(127) Id. c. 44, 45. Boet. l. 12. Buchan. l. 7.

A. D. 978, to contend with the usurper, they left the kingdom to preserve their lives. Malcolm retired into his principality of Cumberland, and Donald into the western isles (128). Macbeth being now in the peaceable possession of the throne, endeavoured to secure it, by a just and popular administration, protecting his subjects from the lawless violence of robbers, and the oppressions of the nobility. By these means the first ten years of his reign were very happy, being undisturbed, either by intestine commotions or foreign invasions. By degrees, however, Macbeth departed from this wise and just course of government, and degenerated into a suspicious and cruel tyrant. Becoming jealous of Bancho thane of Lochaber, who had been the chief instrument of his elevation to the throne, he invited him, with his son Fleance, to an entertainment, and appointed certain assassins to kill them both in their return home; by whom Bancho was actually slain, and Fleance made his escape with great difficulty (129). Several noblemen, who were secretly in the influence of Malcolm prince of Cumberland, hearing of the fate of Bancho, abandoned their country, and retired into the territories of that prince, for their own preservation. Macduff thane of Fife was one of these fugitives, who retired with so much precipitation, that he left his wife and children behind him, who were all put to death by Macbeth, and his estate confiscated (130). These exiles, and particularly Macduff, earnestly intreated Malcolm to raise an army, and invade Scotland, in order to vindicate his own right and theirs, and to take vengeance on the tyrant for their common injuries. The prince after some hesitation, complied with their intreaties; and having obtained a considerable aid from Edward the Confessor, king of England, commanded by the famous Seward earl of Northumberland, he entered Scotland at the head of a powerful army, A. D. 1054 (131). Macbeth, who was a brave and warlike prince, was not wanting to himself on this occasion; but raising all his forces, encountered the invaders in several actions; in one of which earl Seward lost his eldest son, a young nobleman of great

(128) Buchan. l. 7.

(129) Doct. l. 2. Buchan. l. 7.


(130) Fordun. l. 4. c. 46.

(131) Id. l. 5. c. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. R. Hoveden. Annal.



hopes (132). By degrees, all the low country submitted to Malcolm, and Macbeth retired into the highlands, trusting much to the difficulty of the country and the strength of his castle of Dunfinnan. Near this place a decisive battle was fought, A. D. 1057; in which Macbeth was defeated, and slain by the hands of Macduff, and the greatest part of his army cut in pieces (133). A few of Macbeth's most zealous partisans, who escaped from this battle, despairing of mercy from the conqueror, proclaimed Lulach, the son of the late usurper, king. But Lulach, who was a weak prince, was defeated and slain at Strathbolgie, about four months after the battle of Dunfinnan (134). Upon this all Scotland submitted with joy to Malcolm, who was crowned at Scone, amidst the acclamations of an infinite multitude of people of all ranks. This prince, who was surnamed *Cannmore*, or *Great Head*, filled the throne of Scotland when William duke of Normandy landed with his army in England, A. D. 1066; and therefore the events of his reign fall more properly to be related in the first chapter of the third book of this work.

A. D. 978,  
to 1066.



(132) Fordun, l. 5. c. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Hen. Hunt. l. 6.

(133) Fordun, l. 5. c. 7. Boet, l. 12. Buchan. l. 7.

(134) Fordun, l. 5. c. 8.

T H E  
H I S T O R Y  
O F  
G R E A T B R I T A I N.

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B O O K II.

C H A P. II.

*The History of Religion in Britain, from the arrival of the Saxons, A. D. 449, to the landing of William Duke of Normandy, A. D. 1066. \**

Plan of  
this chap-  
ter.

**T**HE arrival of the Saxons in Britain was as fatal to the sacred as to the secular interests of those who invited them; and it brought about as great a revolution in the religious as in the civil state of this island. For the Saxons, who came over under Hengist and Horsa, and those who followed them at different times, and under different leaders, being all Heathens and idolaters, extirpated the Christian religion, with its professors, wherever their arms prevailed, and introduced their own absurd and impious superstitions in its place. At length, however, these Pagan invaders were by degrees converted to Christianity, and from thenceforward joined with the other inhabitants of this island in the profession of that holy religion. In order, therefore, to give our readers a distinct view of the state of religion in Britain during this long period, it will be necessary to lay before them,—1. A very brief delineation of the religion of the Anglo-Saxons while they continued Heathens, and  
of

of the state of the British churches in those unhappy times;—2. An account of the conversion of the several states of the heptarchy to the Christian religion;—and, 3. The church history of all the nations of Britain, from the conversion of the Saxons to the landing of the Normans.

## SECTION I.

*The history and delineation of the religion of the Heathen Saxons, from their arrival in Britain, A. D. 449, to the coming of Austin for their conversion, A. D. 596, with a brief account of the state of the Christian churches in Britain in that period.*

AS the Anglo-Saxons, who settled in Britain in the fifth and sixth centuries, came from the north-west corner of Germany, contiguous to Denmark, we have reason to believe that their religion was the same, or very nearly the same, with that of the Pagan Danes. In delineating the Pagan religion of the Anglo-Saxons and Danes, we shall give a very brief account, of its priests, who taught its principles, and performed its sacred rites; of the religious principles which they taught; of the deities whom they worshipped; of the various acts of worship which they paid to these deities, with their times, places, and other circumstances. This was the order observed in describing the Druidism of the ancient Britons (1); and there is no reason to deviate from on this occasion.


It must be confessed, that it is impossible to give so satisfactory an account of the Saxon and Danish priests as we did of the British Druids; because those priests were almost quite unknown to the Greek and Roman writers. Julius Cæsar positively affirms, “That the Germans had no Druids to preside over the rites of their religion (2).” By this he cannot mean, that the Germans

Cent. V.

Plan of  
this section.Anglo-Saxon and  
Danish  
priests.

(1) See vol. 1.

(2) Cæsar de Bel. Gal. 1. 6.  
had

Cent. V.  had no priests, but only that their priests were not called Druids, and were not in all respects the same with those of the Gauls and Britons. This assertion of Cæsar hath indeed been called in question by several modern authors; but the positive testimony of such a writer as Cæsar, who had so good an opportunity of knowing the truth of what he testified, is more to be regarded than the vague conjectures of a thousand moderns (3). Though Tacitus frequently mentions the priests of the ancient Germans, he never calls them Druids, as he doth those of the ancient Britons; and Cluverius, one of the most learned of the German antiquaries, confesseth, that he had not been able to discover the name of those priests (4). The conjectures of the two learned authors mentioned below, concerning this matter, are not supported by sufficient evidence (5).

Their hierarchy. We know not, with any certainty, what were the different degrees and orders in the hierarchy of the Saxon and Danish priests, or whether, like the Druids, they were divided into several classes, which performed distinct parts in their religious rites. In a celebrated temple of Odin, or Wodin, the chief deity of both these nations, it is said, there were twelve Drottes of superior dignity, who presided over all the affairs of religion, and governed all the other priests (6). There was one who bore the name, and exercised the office, of the chief priest in the kingdom of Northumberland, and probably in each of the other kingdoms of the heptarchy (7). The priesthood among the Danes and Saxons, as among many other ancient nations, was confined to certain families, and descended from father to son (8). The Heathen Danes and Saxons had also priestesses, who officiated in the temples of their female deities; and Frigga, their chief goddess, was served by kings daughters and ladies of the highest ranks (9).

(3) Elius Sædus, p. 254. Prikius, p. 41. Kexler, p. 378.

(4) Tacit. Annal. l. 14. c. 30. Cluver German. Ant. p. 166.

(5) Mr. Mallet, in his Introduction to the History of Denmark, c. 4. conjectures, that the Heathen priests among the Danes were called *Drottes*; and that there is some affinity between *Drottes* and *Druides*. But the etymologies of these two words are totally different. Dr. Macpherson, Dissertation, 19. thinks, that *Cyge* was the name of the priests among the Heathen Saxons; but it seems rather to be the proper name of a particular person.

(6) Mallet, Introduction. Hist. Denmark, c. 7. Bede Hist. Eccles. l. 2. c. 13.

(7) Mallet, *ibid.* c. 7.

(8) Mallet, Introduction. Hist. Denmark, c. 7.

(9) Cæsar de Bel. Gall. l. 6.



The Germans, as we are assured by Cæsar, were not such bigots as the Gauls and Britons, but rather a little lukewarm in religious matters : and in consequence of this, their priests did not enjoy so many honours, nor accumulate so much wealth, as the Druids (10). We hear nothing of the Danish or Saxon priests acting the part of legislators and supreme judges among these haughty nations, obliging the greatest kings, and most powerful states, to submit to their decisions. The chief priest of the Northumbrians complained bitterly, that he had reaped very little honour or advantage from all his devotions to the gods ; which made him suspect, that the gods whom he worshipped had no power to reward their votaries. “ There is not one of your subjects “ (said this high-priest to king Edwin) who hath served “ the gods with so much devotion as I have done ; and “ yet there are many of them who have received more “ ample rewards and greater honours, and have prof- “ pered much better in all their affairs. If these gods “ had any power, would they not exert it in my favour, “ who have worshipped them with so much zeal (11) ? ” Tacitus indeed acquaints us, that certain priests of the god of war attended the armies of the ancient Germans, and flogged the soldiers when they committed any crime (12). But this was certainly no very honourable, and probably no very lucrative office. The Danish, and Saxon priests were not only exempted from war, but even prohibited to appear in arms, or so much as to mount a horse (13). But this must be considered as a mark of disrespect rather than of honour, as riding and wearing arms were the most honourable badges of distinction among those warlike nations. Their priestesses enjoyed much greater authority and higher honours among the ancient Germans, and their posterity in this island, than their priests. Some of these consecrated females were consulted as infallible oracles, and almost worshipped as divinities (14) ; but this was as much owing to their gallantry, and the high opinion they entertained of the fair sex in general, as to their devotion.

(10) Cæsar de Bel. Gal. l. 6.

(11) Bede Hist. Eccles. l. 2. c. 13.

(12) Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 7.

(13) Bede Hist. Eccles. l. 2. c. 13.

(14) Cluver. German. Antiq. p. 165.

Cent. V.

Their doctrines better known than those of the Druids.

The religious principles of the ancient Germans, Danes, and other northern nations, are said to have been originally very pure and rational; but, like those of other Heathen nations, were gradually corrupted by the invention of many absurd and extravagant fables. These principles, however, are better known than those of many other nations of antiquity; because their priests did not affect that mysterious secrecy which was observed by the Druids and other ancient priests; and a very curious system of their fabulous theology, called the *Edda*, hath lately been presented to the public in the English language (15). To this system we must refer such of our readers as are not satisfied with the following very brief abstract of their religious principles.

Their religious principles.

The ancient Germans, Danes, and other northern nations, were not unacquainted with the great doctrine of one Supreme Deity; "the author of every thing that existeth; the eternal, the ancient, the living and awful being; the searcher into concealed things; the being that never changeth; who liveth and governeth during the ages, directeth every thing which is high, and every thing which is low (16)." Of this glorious being, they esteemed it impious to make any visible representation, or to imagine it possible that he could be confined within the walls of temples (17). But these great truths had been in some measure lost and corrupted by the introduction of a multiplicity of gods and images, before the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons and Danes in England, as will by and by appear. The Saxon and Danish priests believed and taught the immortality of the human soul, and a state of rewards and punishments after death; rejecting the Druidical doctrine of the transmigration of souls as an absurd fiction (18). The place of rewards they called *Valhalla*, where the heroes spent the day in martial sports, and the night in feasting on the flesh of the boar scrimmer, and drinking large draughts of beer or mead out of the skulls of their enemies whom they had slain in battle, presented to them by beautiful young virgins, who waited upon them at table (19). The place of

(15) See Northern Antiquities, vol. 2.

(16) Mallet Introd. Hist. Den. c. 5.

(17) Tacit. de Mor. German. c. 9.

(18) Mallet Introd. c. 6. Keyser Antiq. Septent. p. 117.

punishment they called *Niflheim*, or, *The Abode of Evil*, where Hela dwelt; whose palace was *Anguisb*, her table *Famine*, her waiters *Expectation* and *Delay*, the threshold of her door *Precipice*, her bed *Leannest*, and her looks struck terror into all beholders (20). In the former of those places, all brave and good men, and in the latter, all cowards and bad men, were to reside to the end of this world, when the heavens and the earth, and even the gods themselves, were to be consumed by fire (21). After this general conflagration, a new and more glorious world was to arise out of the ashes of the former; the heroes, with all good and just men, were to be admitted into Gimle, a palace built of shining gold, far more beautiful than Valhalla; and cowards, assassins, false swearers, and adulterers, were to be confined in Naitrande, a place built of the carcases of serpents, far more dismal than Niflheim (22). The moral precepts which were most inculcated by the Saxon and Danish priests, were these three,—To worship the gods,—To do no wrong,—and, To fight bravely in battle (23). Their knowledge in morality, however, was not confined to these three heads, but they occasionally recommended many other virtues; and it will not be easy to find, among compositions merely human, a more beautiful collection of prudential and moral maxims than in the Hovamaal, or sublime discourse, ascribed to Odin, the chief deity of the Heathen Danes and Saxons (24).

Odin is believed to have been the name of the one true God among the first colonies who came from the east, and peopled Germany and Scandinavia, and among their posterity for several ages (25). But at length the conqueror, the leader of a new army of adventurers from the east, over-run the north of Europe, erected a great empire, assumed the name of *Odin*, and claimed the honours which had been formerly paid to that deity (26). From thenceforward this deified mortal, under the name of *Odin* or *Wodin*, became the chief object of the idolatrous worship of the Saxons and

Their gods  
Odin.

(19) Mallet Introduct. c. 6. Keysser Antiq. Septent. p. 117.

(20) Id. ibid.

(21) Edla Island, fable 23.

(22) Mallet, c. 5. (23) Keysser Antiq. Septent. p. 124, &c.

(24) See Northern Antiquities, v. 2 p. 206.

(25) Cluver. Ger. Antiq. p. 183. Mallet Introduct. c. 6.

(26) Id. ibi.

Cent. V. Danes in this island, as well as of many other nations. Having been a mighty and successful warrior, he was believed to be the god of war, who gave victory, and revived courage in the conflict (27). Having civilized, in some measure, the countries which he conquered, and introduced arts formerly unknown, he was also worshipped as the god of arts and artists. In a word, to this Odin his deluded worshippers impiously ascribed all the attributes which belong only to the true God: to him they built magnificent temples, offered many sacrifices, and consecrated the fourth day of the week, which is still called by his name in England, and in all the other countries where he was formerly worshipped (28). Notwithstanding all this, the founders of all the kingdoms of the Anglo-Saxon heptarchy pretended to be descended from Wodin, and some of them at the distance only of a few generations (29).

The goddess Frea. Next to Odin, Frea, or Frigga, his wife, was the most revered divinity among the Heathen Saxons, Danes, and other northern nations. As Odin was believed to be the father, Frea was esteemed the mother of all the other gods (30). In the most ancient times, Frea was the same with the goddess Herthus, or Earth, who was so devoutly worshipped by the Angli and other German nations (31). But when Odin, the conqueror of the north, usurped the honours due only to the true God, his wife Frea usurped those which had been formerly paid to mother Earth. She was worshipped as the goddess of love and pleasure, who bestowed on her votaries a variety of delights, particularly happy marriages and easy child-births (32). To Frea the sixth day of the week was consecrated, which still bears her name.

Thor. Thor, the eldest and bravest of the sons of Odin and Frea, was, after his parents, the greatest god of the Saxons and Danes while they continued Heathens. They believed, that Thor reigned over all the aerial regions, which composed his immense palace, consisting of five hundred and forty halls; that he launched the thunder, pointed the lightning, and directed the meteors,

(27) Edda Island. fable 10.

(28) Id. ibid.

(29) Chron. Saxon. p. 13. 15. 19. 20. 25. 69. 77.

(30) Edda, fable 10.

(31) Tacit. de Monb. German. c. 40.

(32) Mallet, Introduët. c. 6.



winds, and storms (33). To him they addressed their prayers for favourable winds, refreshing rains, and fruitful seasons; and to him the fifth day of the week, which still bears his name, was consecrated. Cent. V.

Besides these three greatest divinities, the Saxons and Danes had a prodigious number of inferior gods and goddesses, to whom they paid some kind of religious homage. Of these it will be sufficient to name a few. Balder, the second son of Odin and Frea, was the god of light; Niord, the god of waters; Tyr, the god of champions; Brage, the god of orators and poets; and Heimdall was the door-keeper of the gods, and the guardian of the rainbow (34). A malevolent, cunning, and powerful spirit, named *Loke*, was by some esteemed a god, by others an enemy both to gods and men, by all an object of many superstitious terrors (35). Frea and Odin had eleven daughters, who were all goddesses, viz. Eira, the goddess of medicine; Gefione, of virginity; Fulla, of dress; Freya, of true love; Lofna, of reconciliation; Vara, of vows; Snotra, of good manners; Gna, the messenger of Frea, &c. (36). In a word, all the nations of the north, and amongst others the Danes and Saxons, believed that the sun, moon, stars, air, earth, sea, rivers, lakes, woods, mountains, &c. were inhabited and ruled by certain genii, who were capable of doing much good or much hurt to mankind; and on that account were intitled to some degree of veneration (37). Such were the vain imaginary deities our unhappy ancestors, in the times of darkness, worshipped. It now only remains to inquire, what were the various acts, and other circumstances, of that worship.

The acts of worship paid to their gods by the Heathen Danes and Saxons were these four; songs of praise and thanksgiving,—prayers and supplications,—offerings and sacrifices,—incantations, and rites of divination; in order to—express their admiration of their perfections, and gratitude for their benefits,—to obtain those blessings from them which they desired;—to appease their displeasure, and gain their love,—and to penetrate into their designs. Rites of worship.

Mankind have been always apt to form their ideas of the dispositions of the deities whom they worshipped, from the songs of praise.

(33) Edda, Fable 17.

(34) Mallet, *Introduct.* c. 6.(35) *Id.* *ibid.*(36) *Id.* *ibid.*(37) *Id.* c. 5.

**Cent. V.** from those which they felt in their own bosoms. Conscious that nothing was more soothing to themselves than the voice of praise, expressions of gratitude and admiration; these they constantly offered to the objects of their worship. The songs of praise composed in honour of Odin, and sung at the solemnities of his worship, were almost innumerable; and in those songs, no fewer than one hundred and twenty-six honourable epithets were bestowed on that god (38). All the other gods and goddesses had many songs composed and sung in their praise, with a number of epithets, in proportion to the powers ascribed to them, and the degrees of veneration in which they were held by their worshippers (39).

**Prayers.** Prayers constituted a very considerable part of the worship which the Pagan Danes and Saxons paid to their divinities; and it was one of the chief functions of their priests, to instruct them in the powers and properties of their several gods and goddesses, and in the prayers which they were to make to them according to their respective powers. To Odin they were directed to pray for victory in battle; to Frigga, for success in love and courtship; to Thor, to avert his thunderbolts from themselves, and point them against their enemies; to Niord, for prosperous voyages and success in fishing; to Freya, for favourable seasons and plentiful crops, &c. (40). They boasted much of their exact knowledge of the attributes and functions of their several gods, and of the prayers that were to be put up to each of them; and to this they ascribed their prosperity and success in their undertakings (41). But when they did not obtain a favourable answer to their prayers, they were not afraid to testify their displeasure against their gods, by shooting their arrows and throwing their darts towards heaven (42).

**Sacrifices.** The Danes and Saxons were not sparing of their offerings and sacrifices, to gain the favour and appease the anger of their god; and it was another branch of the duty of their priests to instruct them what kind of oblations were most acceptable to their several deities.

(38) Northern Antiquities, v. 2, p. 189.

(39) *Id.* *ibid.* — *Th. v. de Morib. German.* c. 2.

(40) *Ed. a. 10. ind.* Fable 12. c.

(41) *Id.* *ibid.*

(42) *Old. Magal. Hist.* l. 5. c. 9.

To Odin they taught the people to sacrifice horses, dogs, Cent. V. and falcons, and on some occasions cocks, and a fat bull, being all brave and fierce animals; to Frigga the largest hogs; and to Thor fat oxen and horses (43). These victims were slain before the altar, their blood received into a vessel prepared for that purpose, and some part of it sprinkled on the assembly: the intrails were inspected by the priests, to discover the will of the gods from their appearances: some of the flesh was burnt on the altar, and on the rest the priests and people feasted (44). At these feasts, their favourite liquors, beer and ale, were not forgotten; of which they drank deep and frequent draughts to the honour of their gods, putting up some wish or prayer at every draught. In times of famine, or other national calamities, or at the eve of some dangerous war, the Danes and Saxons, as well as other Heathen nations, offered human sacrifices to their gods, believing them to be more acceptable than any other. These unhappy victims were commonly chosen from among criminals, captives, or slaves; but on some pressing occasions, persons of the highest dignity were not spared (45).

No nations in the world were more addicted to divination, or made greater efforts to penetrate into futurity, and discover the counsels of heaven, than the ancient Danes and Saxons. Besides those arts of divination practised by their priests, in common with those of other nations, they had many others peculiar to themselves, which may be seen in the authors quoted below (46). They gave great credit to the predictions of certain old women, who pretended to consult the dead, to converse with familiar spirits, and to have many other ways of discovering the will of the gods, and the issue of important undertakings. Some of these women became so famous for their responses, that they were consulted by the greatest states as infallible oracles, and even revered as goddesses, who, if they had lived a few ages later, would have been burnt for witches (47).

(43) Mallet, *Introduct.* c. 7.(44) *Id. ibid.*(45) *Id. ibid.*(46) Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 9, 10 Cluver. *Antiq. Ger.* l. 1. c. 36. Keysser *Antiq. Septent.* p. 323, &c. *Northern Antiquities*, vol. 1. c. 7.(47) Tacit. de Morib. Ger. c. 8. Cæsar *Bel. Gal.* l. 1. c. 50. Keysser, p. 59.

Cent. V.

Their  
temples.

In very ancient times, the Saxons, Danes, and other northern nations, had no covered temples, but worshipped their gods in sacred groves and circles of rude stones. By degrees, however, they began to build temples, in imitation of other nations, and at length erected some of incredible grandeur and magnificence (48). In each of these temples there was a chapel, which was esteemed the most holy place, where the images of the gods were set upon a kind of altar; before which stood another altar, plated with iron, for the holy fire, which burnt perpetually; and near it a vase for receiving the blood of the victims, and a brush for sprinkling it upon the people (49).

Images.

About the same time that the Danes, Saxons, and other northern nations, began to build temples, they began also to set up the statues or images of their gods in these temples. The image of Odin was crowned, and completely armed, with a drawn sword in his right hand; that of Frigga was an hermaphrodite, a bow in one hand, and a sword in the other; that of Thor was crowned with stars, and armed with a ponderous club; and those of the other gods had emblems suited to their respective attributes (50). There were many such temples adorned with idols in different parts of England, while the Anglo-Saxons continued Heathens; but they were all destroyed at their conversion to Christianity (51).

Festivals.

Though the sacred fire was kept perpetually burning, and sacrifices were frequently, perhaps daily, offered in the temples of the Danes and Saxons; yet there were certain great festivals that were celebrated with peculiar solemnity. One of the greatest of these festivals was celebrated at the winter solstice, which was called the Mother Night, both on account of this festival, and of its being the beginning of the Anglo-Saxon year. This feast was also called *Jule*, a name by which the Christian festival of Christmas, observed about the same season of the year, is still known in many parts of Scotland, and in some parts of England. The Heathen *Jule* was celebrated in honour of the god Thor, not only with sacrifices, but

(48) Old Magni Hist. l. 3. c. 6.

(49) Mallet, vol. 1. c. 7.

(50) Mallet, *ibid.* c. 7. Verlegan's Religion, Sec. c. 3.

(51) Bede Hist. Eccl. l. 2. c. 13.



with feasting, drinking, dancing, and every possible expression of mirth and joy (52). The second great festival was kept during the first quarter of the second moon of the year, in honour of the goddess Frea, much in the same manner with the former (53). The third and greatest festival was celebrated in honour of Odin, in the beginning of the spring, before they set out on their warlike expeditions, in order to obtain victory from that god of battles. Besides these three great festivals, in honour of their three greatest gods, they kept many others, at different seasons, in honour of their inferior deities (54).

Such was the vain, absurd, and cruel superstition which reigned in all those parts of England possessed by the Saxons and Danes before their conversion to Christianity. The intelligent reader must observe, that though it bore a general resemblance in several particulars to the Druidism of the ancient Britons, it differed from it greatly in not a few respects. The Saxon and Danish priests were neither held in such profound veneration, nor enjoyed so much power, especially in civil affairs, as the Druids; their speculative opinions in many things were very different; as were also the objects, the seasons, and ceremonies, of their worship.

In the period between the arrival and the conversion of the Saxons, the Christian religion was professed by all the other nations of Britain, except the northern Picts, among whom it was also introduced by the famous St. Columba, A. D. 565 (55). It must, however, be confessed, that the church-history of the Britons, Scots, and Picts, is very imperfect in this period; either because their clergy in those calamitous times had no leisure to write memoirs of their transactions, or because those memoirs have been lost.

After the departure of Germanus, the British churches were governed with great prudence, and preserved from the contagion of heresy, by some of his disciples. Among these, Dubritius and Illutus were most distinguished for their learning, as well as for their zeal and piety. Dubritius was first bishop of Landaff, and afterwards archbishop of Caerleon; and had the chief direction of two schools for the education of young persons for the service of the

(52) Maller, c. 7.

(53) Id. *ibid*.(54) Id. *ibid*.

(55) Bed. Hist. Eccles. J. 3. c. 4.

Cent. V. church (56). Iltutus presided over a famous seminary of learning, at a place which, from him, is still called *Lantuet*, or, *The church of Iltut*, in Glamorganshire (57). In these academies many excellent persons, who arrived at the highest dignities in the church, both at home and abroad, received their education; as Samson archbishop of Dol in Bretagne; St. Magloire, his successor in that see; Maclovius bishop of St. Malo; Daniel bishop of Bangor; St. Theleau bishop of Landaff; St. David bishop of Menevia; and many others (58). The British churches, therefore, amidst all the calamities of this period, flourished considerably both in piety and learning, under the ministry of Iltutus, Dubritius, their pupils and successors. It cannot be denied indeed, that Gildas, who flourished in those times, hath left a very dismal picture of the ignorance and irreligion of the British clergy. But Gildas was evidently a man of a querulous and gloomy temper, who painted every thing in the most unfavourable colours; and many of the clergy were probably far inferior to the eminent persons named above in sanctity or knowledge (59).

British  
councils.

Several British synods were assembled in this period; but we know very little with certainty of their transactions. Some of these seem to have been mixed assemblies of the most considerable men both in church and state, for regulating civil as well as ecclesiastical affairs (60). In one of these mixed assemblies, A. D. 465, king Vortigern is said to have been dethroned, and Ambrosius chosen king; in another, A. D. 512, Dubritius was translated from Landaff to Caerleon, and St. Theleau appointed bishop of Landaff in his room; and in a third, A. D. 516, the famous king Arthur was crowned, and his uncle St. David appointed archbishop of Caerleon; who soon after removed the seat of his see to Menevia, which was afterwards, from him, called *St. David's* (61). This celebrated archbishop held an ecclesiastical synod of all the British clergy, A. D. 519, for extirpating the remains, and preventing the revival, of

(56) Uffer. Primord. Brit. Eccles. p. 445.

(57) I. eland. Collect. v. 2. p. 42.

(58) Godwin de Præful. Angliæ. p. 600. 617.

(59) Gild. Epist.

(60) Spelman. Concil. vol. 1. p. 60. 61.

(61) Id. ibid.

the Pelagian heresy. Oudocius bishop of Landaff held Cent. V. three provincial synods of the clergy of his diocese, for inflicting the censures of the church against certain powerful delinquents. But the transactions of those synods reflect very little honour on the British princes or clergy concerned in them; as they shew the former to have been guilty of the most horrid acts of perfidy and cruelty, and the latter to have been ready enough to accept of liberal donations to the church, as the most solid evidences of their repentance (62).

The church-history of the Scots and Picts, in this period, is even more imperfect than that of the Britons. A few years before the arrival of the Saxons, Palladius, a Greek by birth, is said to have been ordained a bishop by Celestine bishop of Rome, and sent to the Scots who believed in Christ (63). One chief design of this mission seems to have been, to preserve the Christian Scots from the infection of the Pelagian heresy, which was so zealously propagated by their countryman Celestius. It is not certainly known how long Palladius continued among the Scots, nor who succeeded him in the direction of their ecclesiastical affairs; though it is unquestionable, that there must have been a considerable interval between his departure or death and the arrival of the famous St. Columba from Ireland, about the middle of the sixth century (64). This extraordinary person soon gained so great an ascendant, both over princes and people, that he became a kind of dictator among the Scots and Picts, in civil as well as religious matters, for more than thirty years (65). Having obtained a grant of the small island Hii, one of the Ebudæ, he there built a monastery, which was long considered as the mother and queen of all the monasteries in Scotland; and its abbots, though only presbyters, were respected as the chief ecclesiastical persons among the Scots, out of regard to its founder St. Columba, who was a presbyter, and not a bishop (66). In this monastery many excellent persons received their education, and were sent from thence, not only to instruct the Scots and Picts, but

Church-  
history of  
the Scots  
and Picts.

(62) Spelman. Concil. vol. 1. p. 60, 61.

(63) Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. 1. c. 13.

(65) Adamnan. Vita St. Columb.

(66) Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. 3. c. 4.

(64) Id. l. 3. c. 4.

Cent. V. even to convert the Saxons, as we shall see in the next section.

We know of no very remarkable change that happened in the doctrine, discipline, or worship, of the British churches, between the arrival and conversion of the Saxons; those of the south still adhering to the Gallic ritual, which had been introduced among them by St. Germanus bishop of Auxere, and those of the north to that which had been introduced by their first instructors.

## SECTION II.

*The history of religion in Great Britain, from the arrival of Austin, A. D. 596, to A. D. 700.*

Cent. VI.

Circumstances which paved the way for the introduction of Christianity.

THE Saxons, at their coming into Britain, were not only Pagans, but they were animated with the most violent hatred against Christianity. This appeared by their murdering the Christian clergy without mercy, and destroying their places of worship, whenever they fell into their hands (1). Their enmity against the Christian religion was kept alive, and even more inflamed, by their long and bloody contests with the Britons, who were Christians. But when the fierceness of these contests abated, and they began to make treaties of peace, and form alliances, with the ancient inhabitants of the country, and with other Christians, their animosity against the Christian religion gradually diminished, they became better acquainted with it, and looked upon it with a more favourable eye. The marriage of Ethelbert king of Kent, A. D. 570, with BIRTHA, daughter of Cherebert king of France, a Christian princess of great virtue and merit, contributed not a little to abate the prejudices of that prince and his subjects against her religion; for the free exercise of which she had made stipulations in the marriage-contract (2). For this purpose she was allowed the use of a small church without the walls of Canter-

(1) Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. i. c. 15.

(2) Id. c. 25.

bury,



bury, where Luidhart, a French bishop, who came over Cent. VI.  
 in her retinue, with other clergymen, publicly performed all the rites of the Christian worship (3). By these, and other means, many of the Anglo-Saxons, particularly in the kingdom of Kent, were brought to entertain so favourable an opinion of the Christian religion, that they were very desirous of being better instructed in its principles (4).

When the Anglo-Saxons were thus disposed to give the gospel a fair hearing, Providence provided them with instructors. St. Gregory (who was advanced to the papal chair A. D. 590), prompted by his zeal for religion, and having his compassion excited by the sight of some beautiful English youths exposed to sale in the streets of Rome, resolved to attempt the conversion of their countrymen, who, he was told, were still Heathens (5). With this view, he appointed Austin, or Augustin, a monk of the convent of St. Andrew's at Rome, with forty other monks, to go into England, and endeavour to bring the people of that country to the knowledge and profession of Christianity (6). These missionaries accordingly set out on their journey; but before they proceeded far, beginning to reflect on the great distance of the country, the ferocious character of its inhabitants, and their own ignorance of the language of those they were appointed to instruct, they made a stop, and sent back Austin, their leader, to represent these difficulties to St. Gregory, and obtain his permission for their return to Rome. But Gregory rejected their request, and sent them by Austin an animating letter, exhorting them to despise all dangers and difficulties, and proceed boldly in their glorious undertaking, for which they would obtain an immortal reward in heaven (7). By the same messenger, he furnished them with letters of recommendation to the king, queen, and several bishops of France; who received them kindly, and provided them with all necessaries, particularly with interpreters, who understood the language of the Anglo-Saxons, which was then nearly the same with that of the Franks (8). Thus encouraged and provided, Austin,

Arrival  
and success  
of Austin  
and his  
companions.

(3) Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. 1. c. 25.

(4) Gregor. Epist. l. 5. epist. 5<sup>a</sup>, 59.

(5) Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. 1. c. 23. l. 2. c. 1.

(6) Id. ibid.

(7) Gregor. Epist. l. 4. epist. 57.

(8) Id. l. 5. epist. 54. Bed. l. 1. c. 23, 24.

**Cent. VI.** with his companions, sailed from France A.D. 596, and landed in the isle of Thanet; from whence they immediately dispatched one of their interpreters, to acquaint king Ethelbert with the news and design of their coming. That prince soon after gave them an audience in the open air; and having heard their message, replied, that he could not without further consideration abandon the religion of his ancestors; but as they had come so far on a friendly errand, he assigned them a place of residence in the city of Canterbury, and allowed them to use their best endeavours to convert his subjects (9). The missionaries having thus obtained the royal licence, entered the city of Canterbury in solemn procession; carrying before them the picture of Christ, and a silver cross, and singing the following hymn: "We beseech thee, O Lord! of thy mercy let thy wrath and anger be turned away from this city, and from thy holy place; for we have sinned. Hallelujah!" In this manner they proceeded to the place of their residence, and immediately entered on the labours of their mission; which were crowned with such success, that in a very short time the king, and great multitudes of his subjects, were converted; of whom Austin baptized no fewer than ten thousand on Christmas day (10). Things bearing this favourable aspect, Austin made a journey into France; and was there, by the archbishop of Arles, consecrated archbishop of the English, hoping that this new dignity would give additional influence to his exhortations (11). About the same time he dispatched two of his companions to Rome, to acquaint St. Gregory with the joyful tidings of the conversion of the English; and with them he sent several questions in writing, to which he desired answers, for the regulation of his future conduct (12). Some of these questions are so trifling, and others so indelicate, that it would be very improper to insert a translation of them in this place: they may be found at full length, with St. Gregory's answers, in the authors quoted below (13).

**Cent. VII.** Gregory received the news of Austin's success in England with great joy; and resolving to neglect nothing in  
**New missionaries,**

(9) Bed. l. i. c. 25.

(10) Gervas. Ast. Pontific. Cant. apud decem script. col. 1632.


(11) Bed. Hist. l. i. c. 27.

(12) Id. ibid

(13) Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. i. c. 27. Spelman. Con. tom. i. p. 95.  
 his

his power to render it still greater, he sent back his messengers, and with them Mellitus, Justus, Paulinus, and several others, to assist in propagating the knowledge of the gospel among the English. With these new missionaries he sent commendatory letters to several princes and bishops of France, and to the king and queen of Kent, with certain prudential admonitions to Austin, a model for the government of the church of England, and a valuable present of books, vestments, sacred utensils, and holy relics (14). One of the advices which Gregory gave to Austin was, not to destroy the Heathen temples of the English, but only to remove the images of their gods, to wash the walls with holy water, to erect altars, and deposit relics in them, and so convert them into Christian churches; not only to save the expence of building new ones, but that the people might be more easily prevailed upon to frequent those places of worship to which they had been accustomed. He directs him further, to accommodate the ceremonies of the Christian worship, as much as possible, to those of the Heathen, that the people might not be much startled at the change; and in particular, he advises him to allow the Christian converts, on certain festivals, to kill and eat a great number of oxen to the glory of God, as they had formerly done to the honour of the devil (15). These admonitions, which were but too well observed, introduced the grossest corruptions into the Christian worship, and shew how much the apostles of the sixth and seventh centuries had departed from the simplicity and sincerity of those of the first.

Though Gregory's model for the government of the church of England was never put in execution, the following very brief account of it may not be unacceptable. In a letter to Austin, with which he sent him the pall (an ornament peculiar to metropolitans), he directs him to ordain twelve bishops in his own province of Canterbury; to send a bishop to York; and as soon as the English in the north were converted, to ordain twelve other bishops in those parts as suffragans to the see of York, to whose bishop he would then send the pall. He ordains, that as long as Austin lived he should enjoy the

Cent. VII.  
  
 &c. sent to  
 England.  
  
 St. Gregory's model  
 of government for  
 the church of Eng-  
 land.

(14) Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. i. c. 28—33. Spelman. Con. t. i. p. 81—105.

(15) Bed. l. i. c. 30.

**Cent. VII.** primacy over all the bishops of both provinces, as well as over all the British bishops; but that after his death, the metropolitical see should be removed from Canterbury to London; and that from thenceforward, the archbishops of London and York should have precedence, according to the seniority of their consecrations (16). But though these directions might have great influence on Austin and his clergy who had come from Rome, they were so little regarded by the English, and so resolutely opposed by the Britons, that they were never executed.

Austin's attempts to subject the British churches to his authority.

Austin, who seems to have been naturally vain enough, was much elated by those marks of distinction which he received from Rome, and laboured with great earnestness to establish his metropolitical authority over the British churches. With this view, he held two councils with the British bishops and clergy; in which he proposed to them, that if they would acknowledge him for their metropolitan; conform to the church of Rome in the time of keeping Easter, and the manner of administering baptism; and join with the Roman clergy in preaching to the English, he would bear with them in other things (17). But the Britons, strongly attached to their own ancient customs, and greatly irritated at the pride of Austin, who did not so much as rise from his seat to receive them at their coming into council, rejected all his proposals; which put this meek apostle into so violent a passion, that he threatened them with the wrath of Heaven, and the hostilities of the English (18). What influence this good man had in drawing down the wrath of Heaven on the unhappy Britons, it is not so easy to determine; but we have good reason to suspect, that he had but too much hand in kindling the flames of war which soon after broke out between them and their ancient enemies the English, and involved them in very great calamities.

Austin consecrates bishops, and dies.

Austin, after he had failed in his attempts of reducing the British churches under his authority, applied himself to enlarge and regulate the church of England. He consecrated Justus to be bishop of Rochester, Mellitus to be bishop of the East-Saxons, and Laurentius to be his own successor in the see of Canterbury (19). These


(16) Bed. l. 1. c. 29.

(17) Bed. l. 2. c. 2. Spel. Con. t. 1. p. 104.

(18) Id. ibid.

(19) Id. l. 2. c. 3.



consecrations were performed A. D. 604; and Austin Cent. VII. died either that year or the year after, leaving the knowledge and profession of Christianity among the English confined within the narrow limits of the little kingdom of Kent (20). 

Laurentius, the successor of Austin, made a new effort to bring the British Christians to adopt the usages of the church of Rome, by writing pastoral letters both to them and to the Scots, earnestly intreating them to conform to the rites of the Roman church, particularly as to the time of keeping Easter (21). But these letters made no impression on those to whom they were addressed. Laurentius succeeds Austin.

Mellitus was more successful in his endeavours to convert the East-Saxons, who inhabited the countries of Essex and Middlesex, and were under the immediate government of Seber, sister's son to Ethelbert king of Kent, to whom he was tributary. That prince, by the preaching of Mellitus, and the influence of his royal uncle, was persuaded to embrace the Christian religion; in which he was imitated by so many of his subjects, that a bishop's see was established at London, which was then the capital of that little state (22). Mellitus, the first bishop of this see, made a journey to Rome A. D. 610, to consult with Boniface IV. who then filled the papal chair, about the affairs of the church of England, and was present at a council which was then celebrated in that city; and at his return brought with him the decrees of that council, together with letters from the pope to Ethelbert king of Kent, and Laurentius archbishop of Canterbury (23). Mellitus converts the kingdom of Essex.

Not long after the return of Mellitus from Rome, the infant church of England was involved in very great calamities, and threatened with total ruin. For Ethelbert king of Kent dying February 24, A. D. 616, his son and successor Eadbald married his father's widow, and renounced Christianity, which did not tolerate such incestuous marriages; and his defection occasioned the apostasy of the greatest part of his subjects (24). Seber, king of the East-Saxons, did not long survive his uncle, but dying that same year, was succeeded by his three Apostasy of the English, and their recovery.

(20) *Anglia Sacra*, t. i. p. 91.

(21) *Bed. Hist. Eccles.* l. 2. c. 4.

(23) *Id.* l. 2. c. 4.

(22) *Id.* l. 2. c. 3.

(24) *Id.* l. 2. c. 5.

Cent. VII. fons; who having never been Christians, restored the Pagan worship in their dominions, and obliged Mellitus to retire into Kent (25).

Here the three bishops, Laurentius, Justus, and Mellitus, held a consultation concerning the present posture of affairs; and being of opinion, that the cause of Christianity among the English was desperate, they resolved to retire into France, and reserve themselves for better times. In consequence of this resolution, Justus and Mellitus actually departed; but while Laurentius was preparing to follow them, Eadbald king of Kent, struck with remorse for his criminal conduct, repudiated his mother-in-law, returned to the profession of Christianity, and encouraged Laurentius to resume the duties of his office, and invite his brethren to return; who accordingly came back about a year after their departure. Justus was restored to the see of Rochester; but the East-Saxons continuing in their apostasy, Mellitus did not recover his bishopric of London (26). However, Laurentius archbishop of Canterbury dying A. D. 619, Mellitus was advanced to the archiepiscopal chair; in which he sat about six years, and was succeeded by Justus bishop of Rochester A. D. 624 (27).

Conversion of the Northumbrians.

About this time an event happened that paved the way for the further propagation of the gospel in England. This was the marriage of Edwin king of Northumberland to Edelburga, daughter of Ethelbert king of Kent; who being a Christian princess, had the free exercise of the Christian religion secured to her and her household; and Paulinus being consecrated a bishop by Justus, accompanied her into Northumberland (28). This prelate was not only allowed to perform the duties of his sacred function in the queen's family, but to preach the gospel to as many as were willing to hear it. His labours for some time were not very successful; but king Edwin, who was a wise and great prince, having, after long consideration, and many consultations with his council, embraced the Christian religion, his example was followed by Coifi the highpriest, and many of his

(25) Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. 2. c. 5.

(26) Id. ibid.

(27) G. W. de Præul. Ang. p. 58.

(28) Bed. l. 2. c. 9.

nobility,

nobility, and great multitudes of the common people (29). Paulinus commonly followed the court, which resided sometimes in Bernicia and sometimes in Deira, preaching, and baptizing his converts in some neighbouring stream or fountain. The crowds of these converts at length became so great, that Paulinus is said to have baptized no fewer than twelve thousand in one day in the river Swale (30). By the influence of Edwin, and the ministry of Paulinus, Carpwald king of the East-Angles, and many of his subjects, particularly in Lincolnshire, were converted (31). To reward these mighty services, Edwin erected a bishop's see at York for Paulinus, and even obtained an archbishop's pall for him from pope Honorius (32).

Cent. VII.

But when things bore this favourable aspect, the church of Northumberland was almost entirely ruined in a moment, by the deplorable fall of the great king Edwin and his army in battle A. D. 633 (33). The apostasy of the Northumbrians was so general, and the distractions of their country so great after that fatal event, that Paulinus found himself obliged to abandon his scattered flock, and retire into Kent, where he was appointed bishop of Rochester.

Apostasy of the Northumbrians.

Justus archbishop of Canterbury dying A. D. 633, he was succeeded by Honorius, a disciple of St. Gregory, who was consecrated by Paulinus at Lincoln (34). This prelate was the first in England who began to divide his diocese into parishes, and fix a residing clergyman in each; as before his time the clergy resided either in monasteries or bishops houses, and made occasional journeys into other parts, preaching and administering the sacraments (35).

Honorius archbishop of Canterbury.

The churches of Northumberland and East-Anglia did not continue long in a state of desolation; for king Oswald, who had lived many years among the Scots, by whom he was kindly entertained, and instructed in the knowledge of Christianity, having recovered the kingdom of Northumberland, sent into Scotland for Christian clergy to instruct and convert his subjects. Aidan, one

Northumbrians return to Christianity.

(29) Bed. l. 2. c. 14.

(30) Nennius apud xv. script. p. 117.

(31) Bed. l. 2. c. 16.

(32) Id. c. 17.

(33) Id. c. 20.

(34) Id. c. 18.

(35) Godwin, p. 59.

**Cent. VII.** of the most pious and learned of these Scotch missionaries, was appointed the first bishop of Lindisfarne, or Holy-Island; to which place the bishop's seat was removed from York (36). By the labours of Aidan, and many other Scotch monks who followed him into England, the Northumbrians were soon restored to the knowledge and profession of Christianity (37). As the East-Angles had apostatized at the same time, they were restored in the same manner with the Northumbrians. For Sigebert, a prince of their royal family, having lived some time in exile among the Franks, and been by them converted to Christianity, at his restoration to his kingdom, brought with him Felix, a Burgundian priest, who was appointed the first bishop of the East-Angles, and had his see fixed at a place called *Dannoe* (38).

**Kingdom of Wessex converted.** About the same time that Christianity was thus restored among the Northumbrians and East-Angles, it began to be preached to the West-Saxons by Berinus, a missionary from Rome (39). The arrival of Oswald king of Northumberland at the court of Cynigisel king of Wessex, A. D. 635, to marry the daughter of that prince, contributed greatly to the success of Berinus: for by his persuasion Cynigisel not only embraced the Christian religion, but also founded an episcopal see at Dorchester; of which Berinus was the first bishop (40).

**East Saxons return to Christianity.** When the East-Saxons had continued about forty years in a state of apostasy, Sigebert their king was persuaded to embrace Christianity by his friend Oswi king of Northumberland; and great multitudes of his subjects were converted by the ministry of Chad, a Northumbrian priest, who was consecrated bishop of London by Finanus bishop of Lindisfarne (41).

**Kingdom of Mercia converted.** Though the middle parts of England, which constituted the powerful kingdom of Mercia, were surrounded by Christian states on all hands, they continued a long time in Pagan darkness. These parts however were at length visited by the light of the gospel, about the middle of the seventh century, in the following manner (42). Penda, the eldest son of Penda king of Mercia, having

(36) Bed. l. 1. c. 3.

(37) Id. c. 5.

(38) Id. l. 1. c. 15.

(39) Id. c. 7.

(40) Id. ibid. (41) Id. l. 2. c. 27.

(42) Bed l. 2. c. 21.



visited the court of Oswi king of Northumberland, in order to marry Alchflida, the daughter of that prince, was there converted to Christianity, with all his followers. At his return home, he carried with him four clergymen, named *Cham*, *Adda*, *Belle*, and *Diuma*, who preached the gospel in Mercia with great success; and the last of these, who was a Scotchman, was consecrated the first bishop of the Mercians by bishop Finan (43).

From the above account, it appears, that the English in the kingdoms of Kent and Wexsex were converted to and instructed in the Christian religion by missionaries from Rome and France; while those of Mercia and Northumberland received the light of the gospel from preachers of the Scotch nation. All these different teachers established the rites and usages of the churches from whence they came, in those which they planted; which gave rise to many controversies between the English churches in the south, and those in the north, about their respective customs; particularly about the time of keeping Easter, and the form of the ecclesiastical tonsure. The churches planted by the Roman missionaries kept Easter on the first Sunday after the fourteenth and before the twenty-second day of the first moon after the vernal equinox; and those planted by the Scotch kept that festival on the first Sunday after the thirteenth and before the twenty-first day of the same moon (44). By this means, when the fourteenth day of that moon happened to be a Sunday, those of the Scotch communion celebrated the feast of Easter on that day; whereas those of the Romish communion did not celebrate theirs till the Sunday after. The Romish clergy in the south of England, animated with the haughty intolerant spirit of the church from whence they came, were not contented with enjoying their own customs in peace, but laboured with much violence to impose them upon the Britons, Scots, and northern English, who were all abundantly tenacious of their own usages. At length a famous council was summoned by Oswi king of Northumberland at Whitby in Yorkshire, A. D. 664, to determine this mighty controversy; which occasioned no little confusion in his own family, his queen and son following the Roman ritual, while he observed the Scotch. The principal champions on the Romish side at this council were, Agelbert bishop of the West-Sax-

Disputes  
about the  
time of  
keeping  
Easter.

(43) Bed. l. 2. c. 21.

(44) Id. l. 3. c. 25.

Cent. VII. ons, with Agatho, James, Romanus, and Wilfred, priests; while Colman bishop of Lindisfarne, with some of his clergy, managed the argument on the other side. The Scotch orators maintained, That their manner of celebrating Easter was prescribed by St. John the beloved disciple; and the Romanists affirmed, with equal confidence, that theirs was instituted by St. Peter, the prince of the apostles, and the door-keeper of heaven. Oswi was struck with this last circumstance; and both parties acknowledging that Peter kept the keys of heaven, the king declared that he was determined not to disoblige this celestial porter upon any account, but to observe all his institutions to the utmost of his power, for fear he should turn his back upon him when he came to the gate of heaven. This sagacious declaration was applauded by the whole assembly; and the Roman orators obtained a complete victory: at which bishop Colman, and many of his clergy, were so much offended, that they left England, and returned into their native country (45). Though venerable Bede censures these Scotch clergy with great severity, for the abominable error into which they had fallen about the time of keeping Easter, he commends them very much for their great learning, piety, and virtue; particularly for their contempt of riches, and their great diligence in their ministerial offices; which made some little atonement for their most pernicious heresy (46). After the departure of Colman, one Tuda was chosen bishop of the Northumbrians; but he dying not long after, Wilfred, who had been preceptor to Alchfred prince of Northumberland, and the chief speaker on the victorious side at the late council of Whitby, was elected in his room, and sent into France to receive consecration. He was accordingly consecrated by his friend Agilbertus, now archbishop of Paris; but making too long a stay abroad, his see was filled up in his absence by Ceada a Scotchman, but of the Roman communion, who was consecrated by Wini, the first bishop of Winchester (47).

Theodore  
archbishop  
of Canter-  
bury.

After Oswi king of Northumberland embraced the Roman customs, he became zealous in his endeavours to bring all the English churches to a conformity with and obedience to the church of Rome. With this

(45) Bed. l. 3. c. 25.

(46) Id. c. 26.

(47) Eddii Vita Wilfredi. apud xv. script. p. 88.

view, he joined with Egbert king of Kent in sending Wighart, elect of Canterbury, to Rome, to be consecrated according to the Roman ritual. Wighart was received and treated with great respect at Rome, but died, before his consecration, of the plague, which then raged in that city (48). Upon this, Vitalian, who then filled the papal chair, took a bold step, and made choice of one Theodore, a native of Tarsus in Cilicia, a man of courage, learning, and good sense, to fill the place for which Wighart was designed, and consecrated him archbishop of Canterbury, 25th March, A. D. 668 (49). Theodore having received the clerical tonsure after the Roman form, set out for England; where he arrived in May 669, and was favourably received by Egbert king of Kent, and the other English princes. Soon after his arrival, the new archbishop visited all the English churches, consecrated bishops where they were wanting, and reduced every thing to a perfect conformity to the church of Rome. In this progress he terminated the dispute between Ceada and Wilfred about the bishopric of the Northumbrians, by translating Ceada to the see of Litchfield, and establishing Wilfred at York, which was now again become the seat of the bishop of Northumberland (50).

Still further to consolidate this union of the English churches with each other, and with the church of Rome, Theodore summoned a council of the English bishops, with their chief clergy, to meet at Hartford, A. D. 673. At this council, besides the metropolitan, Bisi bishop of the East-Angles, Lutherius bishop of the West-Saxons, Winfred bishop of the Mercians, and Putta bishop of Rochester, were present in person, and Wilfred bishop of York, by proxy. Theodore, who presided in this synod, produced a copy of the canons which he had brought with him from Rome, and pointed out ten of them which were peculiarly necessary to be observed, in order to establish a perfect uniformity among all the English churches; to which he demanded, and obtained, the consent of all the members (51).

Besides this union among the English churches, and conformity to the church of Rome, which was brought

Council of  
Hartford.  
  
Auricular  
confession  
introduc-  
ed.

(48) Bed. l. 3. c. 29.

(49) Id. l. 4. c. 1.

(50) Id. l. 4. c. 2.

(51) Id. l. 4. c. 5. Spelman. Concil. t. 1. p. 152.



Cent. VII. about by Theodore, with the consent and authority of the English kings, this prelate introduced several new doctrines and practices that were formerly unknown. One of the most important of these innovations was the introduction of auricular confession to a priest, as necessary to absolution; directly contrary to the doctrine of the Scotch missionaries, who taught, that confession to God was sufficient (52).

Theodore exerciseth his metropolitical authority.

Theodore having, by his own address, and the favourable disposition of the English princes of that time, obtained a tacit recognition of his own metropolitical power over all the English churches, began to exercise it with no little severity, by deposing Winfred bishop of the Mercians, A. D. 676, for some slight act of disobedience to his authority, which is not mentioned (53). In his room he consecrated Sexulf, founder of the abbey of Peterborough, and about the same time raised Erconwald to the see of London (54).

New bishoprics erected.

By the ninth canon of the council of Hartford, it was proposed, that new bishoprics should be erected where they were most wanted: but though this was one of the most reasonable regulations in the whole collection, the bishops, dreading the diminution of their power and wealth by the division of their bishoprics, did not consent to its immediate execution, but referred it to more mature consideration (55). Till about this time, there was but one bishopric in each of the six kingdoms of the heptarchy which had embraced the Christian religion, except that of Kent, which had two. Some of these bishoprics were of very great extent; particularly that of York, which comprehended all the countries between the Humber and the frith of Forth. Wilfred bishop of that see, naturally vain and ostentatious, exceeded even the kings of those times in magnificence and expence; which excited the indignation of his sovereign Egfred king of Northumberland. This prince, in order to humble the pride of this haughty prelate, as well as for the good of his subjects, resolved to divide his enormous bishopric; and two new bishops, Bosa and Eata, were consecrated by Theodore for the Northumbrian territories (56). Wilfred was not of a temper to sit down tamely with this diminution of his

(52) Egberti Institut. Eccles. p. 281.

(53) Bed. l. 4. c. 6.

(54) Id. ibid.

(55) Spelm. Concil. t. 1. p. 153.

(56) Bed. l. 4. c. 12.



revenues and authority: he repaired to court, and boldly Cent. VII. accusing the king and archbishop of injustice, appealed from them to the pope: a thing so new and unheard of, that it excited a loud laugh in all who were present, who could not believe him to be serious (57). But this ecclesiastical knight-errant soon convinced them, that he was in earnest, by setting out on his journey to Rome, accompanied by a prodigious crowd of monks, who resolved to follow his fortunes (58). After his departure, Bosa was fixed at York, and Eata at Lindisfarne; and not long after two more bishops were consecrated for the Northumbrian kingdom, Tunberet and Trumwin; of whom the former was fixed at Hexham, and the latter at Abercorn, which was then within the kingdom of Northumberland (59). Wilfred, after meeting with many strange adventures in his journey, arrived at Rome, and presented a petition to pope Agatho, in a council of fifty bishops and abbots then sitting, representing the injury which had been done him by Theodore, in dismembering his bishopric without his consent, and praying for redress. This petition, from so distant a corner of the church, was received with uncommon favour by the pope and council; who made a decree, restoring Wilfred to his see, and ordering those who had been thrust into it to be expelled. With this decree Wilfred hastened back into England, and presented it to Egfred king of Northumberland; who was so far from restoring him to his bishopric, that he committed him to prison. So little were the decrees of Rome at that time regarded in England (60).

About the same time the pope sent John, precentor of St. Peter's, into England, to examine the sentiments of the English churches concerning the heresy of the Monothelites, which made a mighty noise. Theodore, to satisfy the pope in this particular, summoned a synod to meet at Hatfield, September 15, A. D. 680; in which a confession of the faith of the church of England (which was perfectly orthodox) was drawn up, and transmitted to Rome (61). The legate had also a private

Council of  
Hatfield.

(57) Eddli Vita Wilfredi, c. 24.

(58) Id. c. 25.

(59) Bed. l. 4. c. 12.

(60) Bed. l. 4. c. 13. Spelm. Concil. t. 1. p. 160.

(61) Spelm. Concil. t. 1. p. 168.

**Cent VII.** commission to promote the restoration of Wilfred to his bishopric, and his reconciliation with Theodore; but in this he had no success.

**New bishoprics erected.** The bishopric of Mercia, which was seated at Litchfield, and comprehended all the dominions of the Mercian kings, was dismembered about this time; and out of it no fewer than four new bishoprics were erected, viz. those of Worcester, Leicester, Hereford, and Sydnacester (62).

**Kingdom of Suth converted by Wilfred.** When Wilfred, the ejected bishop of York, had continued near a year in prison, he obtained his liberty, by the earnest intercession of Æbbe abbess of Coldingham, and aunt to king Egfred, upon this condition, That he should immediately abandon the territories of Northumberland (63). But the resentment and influence of Egfred were so great, that the unhappy Wilfred could find no shelter in any of the Christian kingdoms of the heptarchy, which obliged him to retire into the little kingdom of Suffex, which was still unconverted. Here he met with a very kind reception from Ethelwalch, the reigning king, and Æbæ his queen, who were both Christians, and gave all possible encouragement to him and his companions to preach the gospel to their subjects, who were Pagans. Wilfred, by his learning and eloquence, assisted by the influence of the king and queen, persuaded many of the nobility to embrace the Christian religion, while his companions were no less successful among the common people. To reward and encourage Wilfred and his fellow-labourers, the king bestowed upon him a considerable tract of country in the peninsula of Selfey, with all the cattle and slaves upon it; where he built a monastery, and founded a bishop's see, which was afterwards removed to Chichester (64). While Wilfred resided in these parts, he was the instrument, by the ministry of some of his followers, of converting the inhabitants of the isle of Wight, and obtained a grant of the third part of that island, from Ceadwalla king of Wessex (65). In this manner was the last of the seven Saxon states in England brought into the bosom of the Christian church, about

(62) Higden. Polychron. p. 241.

(63) Eddii Vita Wilfredi, c. 31.

(64) Bed. l. 4. c. 13.

(65) Id. c. 16.

ninety years after the arrival of Austin, and a little before the end of the seventh century. Cent. VII.

The success of Wilfred in the conversion of the South-Saxons regained him the favour and friendship of Theodore archbishop of Canterbury, who recommended him, in the warmest manner, to Ethelred King of Mercia, and to Alfred, who had succeeded his brother Egfred in the kingdom of Northumberland, A. D. 685 (66). This last prince having no personal enmity against Wilfred, permitted him to return into his dominions, A. D. 687, and bestowed upon him the bishopric of Hexham, which was then vacant; to which (if we may believe Eddius, the writer of his life) he afterwards added the see of York, and monastery of Rippon (67). But this ambitious and restless prelate soon forfeited the favour and incurred the displeasure of King Alfred, by refusing to subscribe the canons of the councils of Hartford and Hatfield, and by daily advancing claims to those immense possessions which he had when he was sole bishop of the Northumbrian kingdom, and held, besides, no fewer than twelve abbeys. In the prosecution of those claims, which could not be granted, he at length became so clamorous and turbulent, that king Alfred was provoked to expel him out of his dominions, about five years after his return. Upon this second expulsion, Wilfred retired into Mercia, where he was kindly received by king Ethelred, who bestowed upon him the vacant see of Leicester; where we must leave him for a little (68).

Theodore archbishop of Canterbury died in the twenty third year of his pontificate, and eighty-ninth of his age, A. D. 690 (69). After this see had remained two years vacant, it was filled by Brightwald, an English monk, who governed it thirty-eight years and six months (70). Theodore was certainly one of the greatest men that ever filled the chair of Canterbury. By his influence, all the English churches were united, and brought to a perfect uniformity in discipline and worship;—too large bishoprics were divided, and many new ones erected;—great men were encouraged to build parish-churches, by declaring them and their successors patrons of those churches (71);—a regular provision was

Continuation of Wilfred's history.

Actions and death of Theodore.

(66) Eddii Vita Wilfredi, c. 42.

(67) Id. c. 43.

(68) Id. c. 44.

(69) Godwin de Præful. Angl. p. 61.

(70) Id. ibid.

(71) Bed. Ed. Wheelock, p. 359.



**Cent. VII.** made for the clergy in all the kingdoms of the heptarchy, by the imposition of a certain tax or kirk-shot upon every village, from which the most obscure were not exempted (72). By these and other wise regulations introduced by this great prelate, the church of England became a regular compact body, furnished with a competent number of bishops and inferior clergy, under their metropolitan the archbishop of Canterbury.

**Monasteries of the seventh century.**

In the course of the seventh century, many monasteries were founded in all parts of England. These monasteries were at first designed, in some places, for the seats of bishops and their clergy; in others, for the residence of secular priests, who preached and administered the sacraments over all the neighbouring country; and in all places they were seminaries of learning for the education of youth. No vows of celibacy or poverty were required of the priests who inhabited these monasteries; though, towards the end of this century, celibacy was strongly recommended to the English monks and clergy, by Theodore, in his Penitentials (73). These monasteries being generally well built and well endowed, were by far the most comfortable places of residence in those times; which engaged such numbers of persons of all ranks and characters to crowd into them, that they soon became intolerable grievances (74). The fondness for the monastic life was very much increased by an impious doctrine, which began to be broached about the end of this century, "That as soon as any person put on the habit of a monk, all the sins of his former life were forgiven (75)." This engaged many princes and great men (who have sometimes as many sins as their inferiors) to put on the monastic habit, and end their days in monasteries.

**Superstitions introduced.**

Superstition, in various forms, made great progress in the seventh century; particularly an extravagant veneration for relics, in which the Romish priests drove a very gainful trade, as few good Christians thought themselves safe from the machinations of the devil, unless they carried the relics of some saint about their persons; and no church could be dedicated without a decent quantity of this sacred trumpery (76). Stories of dreams,

(72) Bed. Epist. ad Egberet. p. 307.

(73) Theod. Penitent. p. 7.

(74) Bed. Epist. ad Egberet.

(75) Theod. Capit. Labb. Concil. t. 6. col. 1875.

(76) Spelm. Concil. t. 1. p. 99. 104.



visions, and miracles, were propagated without a blush by the clergy, and believed without a doubt by the laity (77). Extraordinary watchings, fastings, and other arts of tormenting the body, in order to save the soul, became frequent and fashionable; and it began to be believed, that a journey to Rome was the most direct road to heaven (78). Cent. VII.

We know of no important changes that happened in the British churches in the seventh century; during which they had little or no communication either with Rome or Canterbury, but continued to adhere to their ancient doctrines and primitive modes of worship. Some of the Britons, particularly those of Cornwall, it is said, were converted to the Catholic Easter about the end of this century, by the writings of Aldhelm, afterwards bishop of Sherburn; but it is probable, that the victorious arms of the West-Saxon kings contributed as much to this conversion as the writings of that prelate (79). The churches of the Scots and Picts were in the same situation with those of the Britons in the seventh century; unconnected with the churches of Rome and England, they persevered in their ancient usages with the greatest constancy. Adamnan abbot of Iona having been sent ambassador to Alfred king of Northumberland, about the end of this century, was converted to the Catholic Easter, and after his return laboured with much earnestness, and some success, to convert his countrymen (80). State of the British and Scotch churches.

### SECTION III.

*History of Religion in Great Britain, from A. D. 700 to A. D. 800.*

THE peace of the church of England was again disturbed in the beginning of the eighth century by the famous Wilfred, ejected bishop of York. This turbulent prelate was far from being contented with the see Cent. VIII.  
The history of Wil-

(77) Vide Bed. passim.

(79) Bed. l. 5. c. 16.

(78) Id. ibid.

(80) Id. ibid.

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Wilfred continued.

of Leicester bestowed upon him by the king of Mercia, but made unwearied efforts to recover his former high station and great possessions in the kingdom of Northumberland; which still more inflamed the resentment of king Alfred. This prince, with Brithwald archbishop of Canterbury, assembled a synod of English bishops and clergy A. D. 701; to which they invited Wulfred, resolving to prevail upon him, either by persuasions or threats, to retire into a private station. He appeared before the synod; but treated all their persuasions and threats with equal scorn; upon which he was deprived of all his preferments, except the abbey of Rippon, which was left him for a retreat. Wulfred protested against this sentence, and appealed to the pope; which so incensed king Alfred against him, that he would have commanded his guards to cut him in pieces, if the bishops had not interposed (1). These prelates, however, were so much displeased with the refractory behaviour of Wulfred, that they inflicted upon him the highest censures of the church; and both he and his followers were held in such execration, that if any of them made the sign of the cross on the dishes upon a table (a ceremony then used before meat), they were immediately thrown to the dogs (2). The condemned excommunicated prelate departed from Oneasterfield, where the synod was held, into Mercia, in order to discover what impression these proceedings had made on the mind of king Ethelred. After complaining to that prince of the injustice which had been done him, he earnestly requested to know, whether or not he designed to deprive him of the revenues of the bishopric and monasteries which he had given him in his dominions? To which he received this favourable answer, 'That he would not deprive him of these revenues until the final sentence of the pope was known (3). Encouraged by this assurance, he set out on his journey to Rome, where he arrived A. D. 702; and falling upon his knees, presented his petition to the pope; addressed, "To the Apostolic Lord, the thrice-blessed and universal bishop, pope John;" and couched in the most flattering and artful terms. Wulfred was very graciously received, and lodged and entertained,

(1) Spelm. Concil. t. i. p. 202. Eddii Vita Wulfredi, p. 76.

(2) Id. c. 47.

(3) Eddii Vita Wulfredi, p. 76. c. 47.

with all his followers, at the public expence. The archbishop had also sent deputies to Rome, to defend the sentence of the synod, who were not received with equal favour. These deputies accused Wilfred of refusing to subscribe the canons of the two synods of Hartford and Hatfield; to which he replied, that he was willing to subscribe the canons of those synods, as far as they were agreeable to the canons of the church of Rome, and the will of the pope. The deputies accused him further of being guilty of refusing to submit to the sentence of his metropolitan and his bishops in the synod of Onestorfield, and of appealing to a foreign judge, which by the laws of England was a capital crime. But though this was a crime in England, it appeared a most meritorious act at Rome. After both parties had pleaded their cause at full length, and the pope had taken some time to consider of it, with a council which was then sitting, a day was appointed for pronouncing sentence. When that day arrived, the pope appeared in great state, surrounded by the council of bishops; and both parties being present, pronounced his sentence; reversing that of the synod of Onestorfield, and declaring Wilfred entirely innocent of all the crimes laid to his charge. With this sentence, Wilfred returned in triumph into England, was reconciled to Brightwald archbishop of Canterbury, and kindly received by Ethelred king of Mercia. But king Alfred, and his immediate successor Eadwulf, treated the papal sentence with contempt, and would not permit Wilfred to enter their dominions (4).

Though Wilfred had been thus repulsed by these two kings of Northumberland, he never relinquished his pretensions in that kingdom; and his hopes of making these pretensions good began to revive on the accession of Ofred, a child of eight years of age, to that throne, A. D. 704. By his interest with the archbishop, and with Berechtfred, who had the chief direction of affairs in the kingdom of Northumberland, he procured a council to be called in the north, for the final determination of all those disputes, which had subsisted almost forty years, and had occasioned infinite trouble to himself and to his country. This council, which was very numerous, was held in the open air on the banks of the river Nidd in

History of  
Wilfred  
finished.

(4) Eddii Vita Wilfredi, c. 45—58.

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Yorkshire, A. D. 705. Archbishop Brightwald, who presided in it, laid before the council a copy of the pope's sentence in favour of Wilfred, with his letter to the late king Alfred, requiring the restitution of his dignities and possessions in Northumberland, with which that prince had not complied; and asked the members of the council, what they thought was most proper to be done for terminating these long and fatal disputes? The bishops at first discovered no disposition to comply with the pope's sentence; who, they said, had no right to reverse the sentence of an English synod, or to lay any commands on an English king. But at length, by the intreaties of Brightwald, Berechtfred, Ælfeda abbess of Whitby, and others, this tedious affair was compromised in this manner: John of Beverly, bishop of Hexham, was translated to York, which was then vacant; and the bishopric of Hexham, with the abbey of Rippon, were bestowed on Wilfred; with which he remained contented. This famous prelate survived that decision only about four years; and dying A. D. 709, at his monastery of Oundle at Nottinghamshire, he was buried with great funeral pomp at his abbey of Rippon in Yorkshire (5). Wilfred was certainly one of the most extraordinary men of the age in which he lived. On the one hand, he was graceful in his person, engaging in his manners, learned, eloquent, and regular in his conduct, which gained him many powerful friends; but on the other hand, he was ambitious, restless, and inflexible, which raised him up no less powerful enemies, and involved both himself and his country in perpetual broils.

Several  
kings be-  
came  
monks.

The humour of making pilgrimages to Rome, and of retiring into monasteries, still increasing, Coinred king of Mercia laid down his sceptre, and took up the pilgrim's staff, A. D. 709, and travelled to Rome, accompanied by Offa, a young prince of the royal family of the East-Saxons, where they both became monks (6). Not long after, Ina, the victorious king of the West-Saxons, imitated their example, and ended his life in a cloister at Rome, where he founded a house for the entertainment of English pilgrims and the education of English youth (7). This prince, and his cotemporary

(5) Eddii Vita Wilfredi, c. 58—65.

(6) Bed. l. 5. c. 19.

(7) Chron. Saxon. p. 53.



Withred king of Kent, were great friends to the clergy, and made several laws for the security of their persons, privileges, and revenues (8).

The churches of the several English kingdoms enjoyed so much internal peace for many years after the death of Wilfred, that they furnish few materials of importance for their ecclesiastical history; which for a long time consists of little more than the names and succession of bishops in the several sees; with which it would be improper to swell this work. When the venerable historian Bede concludes his excellent history of the church of England A. D. 731, he acquaints us, that it was then governed by sixteen bishops, who had their seats at the following places:—Canterbury, Rochester, London, Dunwich, Helmham, Winchester, Sherburn, Litchfield, Leicester, Hereford, Worcester, Sydnacester, York, Holy Island, Hexham, and Withern (9). There was no bishop in the little kingdom of Suffex at this time; but Sigelm was consecrated bishop of Selfey a few years after; which made the number of bishops in England, before the middle of the eighth century, seventeen (10).

Upon the death of Wilfred, the second bishop of York, A. D. 731, Egbert, brother to Eadbert king of Northumberland, was advanced to that see. This prelate, by his royal birth and great merit, recovered the dignity of a metropolitan, which had been enjoyed by Paulinus the first bishop of York, and obtained a pall from Rome as a badge of that dignity (11).

Nothelmus archbishop of Canterbury dying A. D. 740, Cuthbert bishop of Hereford was translated to that see. An intimate friendship had long subsisted between Cuthbert and his countryman Winfred, who had assumed the name of *Boniface*, and was become archbishop of Mentz. As soon as Boniface received the news of the advancement of his friend to the primacy of England, he wrote him a very long letter; in which, after many professions of esteem and friendship, and most vehement exhortations to the faithful discharge of the duties of his high office, he points out several things in the state of the church of England which required reformation;

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State of  
the church  
of Eng-  
land at  
the death  
of the ve-  
nerable  
Bede.

Egbert  
archbishop  
of York.

Letter of  
Boniface  
archbishop  
of Mentz,  
to Cuth-  
bert  
archbishop  
of Canter-  
bury.

(8) Spelm. Concil. t. 1. p. 182—199.

(9) Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. 5. c. 23.

(10) Godwin de Præsul. p. 548.

(11) Id. t. 2. p. 14.

mation;

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mation; particularly the gaudy dress and intemperate lives of the clergy; the sacrilege of great men, in seizing the government of monasteries, and obliging the monks to perform the most servile work in building their castles, &c.; a thing unknown in any other part of the Christian world. He exhorts him also to put a stop to the nuns, and other good ladies of England, leaving their country, and going in pilgrimage to Rome; because they were generally debauched before they returned, and many of them became common prostitutes in the cities of France and Italy. To remedy all these evils, he advises him to call a council; and for his direction sends him a copy of the canons of a synod, which had been lately held at Mentz, in which he had presided in quality of the pope's legate. For as Boniface had received his preferment in the church by the favour of the pope, he was a zealous advocate for his supremacy, and had contributed very much to bring the churches of Germany under the obedience of the see of Rome; and seems to wish that his friend Cuthbert would act the same part in England (12).

Council of  
Clove-  
shoos.

This letter, it is probable, engaged Cuthbert to assemble a council of the bishops and chief clergy of his province, which met at Cloveshoos, or Clyff, in Kent, A. D. 747. Edelbald king of Mercia, with all the great men of his court, Cuthbert archbishop of Canterbury, with eleven bishops of his province, together with many abbots, abbeesses, and other clergy, were present at this council; in which no fewer than thirty canons were made for the reformation of the lives of the clergy of all ranks, and the regulation of all the affairs of the church of England. The canons of this council, which were for the most part taken from those of the council of Mentz, transmitted by Boniface, contain many wise and judicious regulations, considering the age in which they were made. It is, however, very worthy of our attention, that the council of Cloveshoos made a very important alteration in the canon concerning the unity of the church. The canon of the council of Mentz on this subject runs thus:—"We have agreed in our synod in the confession of the catholic faith, and agreed to continue in unity and subjection to the church of Rome; and desire to be subject to St. Peter and his vicar, to the end of our lives, that we may be esteemed members of that church

“ committed to St. Peter’s care (13).” But the canon of the council of Cloveshoos was couched in the following general terms, without so much as mentioning the church or bishop of Rome: “ That sincere love and Christian unity and affection ought to be amongst all the clergy in the world, in deed and judgment (without flattery of any one’s person), as the servants of one Lord, and fellow-labourers in the same gospel: so that however separated by the distance of place, they may notwithstanding be united in the same judgment, and serve God in one spirit, in the same faith, hope, and charity; daily praying for each other, that every one may faithfully persevere to the end, in the discharge of his holy function (14).” This remarkable caution in the language of this canon, is a sufficient proof, that the clergy of England were not as yet disposed to bend their necks to the intolerable and ignominious yoke of Rome. So careful were they in this council to guard against the incroachments of the pope on the independency of the church of England, that applications to Rome for advice in difficult cases, were discouraged by the twenty-fifth canon, and bishops directed to apply only to their metropolitan in a provincial synod (15). Many excellent advices are given to the bishops, clergy, and people, in the canons of this council. Bishops are directed to visit all parts of their dioceses once every year, for preaching and performing the other duties of their sacred function;—to keep a watchful eye over the conduct of the inferior clergy, who still, for the most part, lived in monasteries;—and to be very careful in examining into the morals and learning of those whom they admitted into holy orders. Abbots are commanded to take care that the clergy, in their respective houses, should be studious, sober, and decent in their dress and deportment. The clergy are enjoined to be diligent in visiting, preaching, and baptizing; to learn to construe in their own language the creed and Lord’s prayer, and the words used in the celebration of mass, and in the office of baptism. The people are exhorted,—to get the creed and Lord’s prayer by heart,—to the religious observation of the Lord’s day,—to frequent communion, to confession, fasting, and almsgiv-

Cent.  
VIII.

(13) Labb. Concil. t. 6. col. 1544. (14) Spel. Concil. t. 1. p. 246.  
(15) Id. ibid.



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ing. Several very singular directions are given in the twenty-seventh canon, to the common people who did not understand Latin, about the manner of their joining in the public prayers and songs of the church, which were all in that language : in particular, they are allowed to affix any meaning to the words they pleased in their own minds, and to pray in their hearts for any thing they wanted, no matter how foreign to the real sense of the public prayers (16). A curious salvo for the absurd practice of praying in an unknown tongue ! This canon also contains the following short form of prayer for the dead : “ Lord, according to the greatness “ of thy mercy, grant rest to his soul, and for thy infinite pity vouchsafe to him the joys of eternal light “ with thy saints.” About this time, some great men, who were not very fond of going through the fastings and prayers enjoined them by their confessors, proposed to hire poor people to fast and pray in their stead. This was certainly a very lucky thought ; but it had not the good fortune to meet with the approbation of this council.

Quarrels  
about the  
bodies of  
the arch-  
bishops.

Cuthbert archbishop of Canterbury died A. D. 758. All his predecessors had been interred by the monks of St. Augustin, in their monastery, without the walls of Canterbury, who now considered the corpses of their departed prelates as a kind of perquisite to which they had a right. Cuthbert, for what reason we know not, formed the design of depriving them of his remains ; and for that purpose obtained a formal permission from Eadbert king of Kent, to be buried in his own cathedral. When he found his end approaching, he directed his domestics to put his body into the grave as soon as he expired, and before they published his death ; which they accordingly performed. When the monks of St. Augustin, on hearing of the archbishop's death, came in solemn procession to take possession of his remains, they were told, that he was already buried ; at which they were so provoked, that they called him a rogue, a fox, a viper, and all the opprobrious names they could invent (17). Bregwin, who was a native of Saxony, but educated in England, was placed in the archiepisco-

(16) Sp=1. Concil. t. 1. p. 246.

(17) Godwin de Præsul. Ang. p. 65.



pal chair, when it had been about a year vacant; and he filled it only three years, dying August 24, A. D. 762. By his own direction, he was buried in the same place, and in the same precipitate manner with his predecessor. When Lambert abbot of St. Augustin's came with a body of armed men to seize the body of the archbishop as his lawful property, and found himself anticipated a second time, he took the matter in a very serious light, and made a solemn appeal to the pope, to interpose his authority for preventing such clandestine funerals for the future. This mighty bustle about the lifeless bodies of these prelates may appear to us ridiculous; but the monks of St. Augustin knew very well what they were about, and how much it redounded to the reputation and interest of their society to be in possession of the remains of those primates, in that superstitious age, when relics were the most valuable treasures. The canons of Christ's church, who had the privilege of choosing the archbishop, and had been concerned in smuggling their two late ones into their graves, were so much alarmed at Lambert's appeal to the pope against them, that, in order to mitigate his zeal in the cause of their rivals, they chose him to fill the vacant chair. This artful conduct had its desired effect: Lambert was appeased, and desisted from prosecuting his appeal (18).

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About the middle of the eighth century, several great and sudden revolutions happened in Italy, and in the state of the church of Rome, which in their consequences very much affected all the Christian world. Though the emperors of the east, who resided at Constantinople, were nominal sovereigns of Rome and Italy; the distance of their situation, and other circumstances, rendered their authority feeble and precarious. When the emperor Leo Isaurus published his famous edict, A. D. 730, against the use and worship of images, commanding them to be removed out of churches, the bishops of Rome opposed the execution of that edict with great vehemence, and encouraged the chief cities of Italy to shake off all subjection to the emperors of the East. But they were soon punished for this revolt by Astulphus king of Lombardy, who over-run the greatest part of Italy, and threatened the destruction of the church of Rome. In

The pope obtains a great accession of power and territories.

(18) Godwin de Præsul. Ang. p. 65.

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this extremity, Stephen II. who was then pope, A. D. 752, earnestly implored the protection of Pepin king of France; who marching at the head of a powerful army into Italy, A. D. 753, defeated Astulphus, and recovered all the countries which he had conquered. But instead of restoring those countries to the emperors of the East, their ancient sovereigns, he bestowed the city and territories of Rome, the exarchate of Ravenna, and several other cities, on the pope; which raised him from the very brink of ruin to be a powerful temporal prince, and enabled him and his successors to prosecute their claims to spiritual dominion over the Christian world with great spirit and success (19).

Death of  
Egbert  
archbishop  
of York.

Egbert, the first English archbishop of York, one of the best and most learned prelates of his age, after having governed that see with great dignity about thirty-six years, died A. D. 767; and was succeeded by Adelbert, who makes no distinguished figure in history (20).

Litchfield  
made the  
see of an  
arch-  
bishop.

While Lambert filled the archiepiscopal chair of Canterbury, a considerable revolution happened in the government of the church of England. Offa king of Mercia, who was by far the most powerful prince of the heptarchy, thinking it inconvenient and dishonourable for the bishops of his kingdom to be subject to the metropolitanical authority of the archbishops of Canterbury, resolved to erect the see of Litchfield, his capital, into an archbishopric. Lambert opposed the execution of this design as much as possible; but Offa's superior power and wealth at length prevailed, and Higbert bishop of Litchfield was declared an archbishop by the pope, A. D. 787; and the sees of Worcester, Hereford, Leicester, Synnacester, Helmham, and Dunwich, dismembered from the province of Canterbury, and put under the jurisdiction of the new archbishop. Higbert dying soon after his elevation, was succeeded by Adulph, who received a pall, the distinguishing badge of the archiepiscopal dignity, from pope Adrian I. (21).

Council of  
Canterbury.

The pope about this time sent Gregory bishop of Offa, and Theophilact bishop of Todi, as his legates into England, to visit the several English churches. These legates acquainted the pope, by a letter, That they

(19) Inver's Hill, Eng. Church, c. 12.

(20) Martin de Presles, Ang. l. 1. p. 15.

(21) Anglia Sacra, t. 1. p. 47.

had arrived safe in England, and waited upon Lambert archbishop of Canterbury, and executed their commission; which was, probably, to obtain his consent to the dismembering of his province:—That they had then repaired to the court of Offa king of Mercia; who received them with great joy, and very much approved of all they had proposed:—That because the country was very extensive, in order to do their business with the greater expedition, they had separated; Theophilact remaining in Mercia, to attend a great council of that kingdom; while Gregory proceeded to the court of Oswald king of Northumberland; who also called a council of the nobility and chief clergy of his kingdom:—That they, the legates, had laid the regulations or canons which they had brought with them from Rome before both these councils; by whom they had been maturely considered, and universally approved, and subscribed by the kings of Mercia and Northumberland, with all the chief nobility, bishops, and clergy of England. The Mercian synod met at a place named *Calcuith*; which is the reason that these regulations are commonly called *the canons of the council of Calcuith* (22). These canons, which are twenty in number, contain a kind of system of the ecclesiastical politics of those times, in which we may discern the clergy beginning to advance several new claims, such as, a divine right to the tenth of all the possessions of the laity, and an exemption from being tried and punished by the civil magistrates (23). To support this last claim, several texts of scripture are most shamefully misinterpreted. The legates, after their arrival in England, observed several peculiarities which they disapproved, and therefore prohibited in these canons; such as,—the priests celebrating mass without shoes or stockings, and with chalice made of horn;—the bishops sitting on the bench with the aldermen, and judging in civil and criminal causes;—and the people still retaining many Pagan practices, as forceries, divinations, &c. (24). It is said to have been in this council of Calcuith that Lambert archbishop of Canterbury gave his consent to the erection of Litchfield into an archbishopric; but if this was true, it appears, that his pride was not abated by this great diminution of his power; for his name stands in the

Cent.  
VIII.

(22) Spelman Concil. t. i. p. 291. (23) Id. canon 11. 17.

(24) Id. canon 10. 3.

Cent.  
VIII.

subscription of the canons before that of Offa king of Mercia.

Contro-  
versy  
about the  
worship of  
images.

The great controversy about the use of images in churches, and the degree of homage that was to be paid to them, which had raged with incredible violence on the continent for more than sixty years, began to be agitated in England towards the end of this century. Two succeeding emperors of the East, Leo Isaurus, and his son Constantine Copronymus, exerted all their power to prevent the worship, by abolishing the use of images in churches; while several succeeding popes, their contemporaries, supported the cause of images with at least equal zeal. In the East, the influence of the emperors at length prevailed; and both the use and adoration of images were condemned by a council of three hundred and thirty-eight bishops, at Constantinople, A. D. 754 (25). But in the West, the authority of the bishops of Rome gained the ascendant. Italy revolted from the emperors, images were retained, and too much regarded, not to say adored. When this controversy seemed to be at an end in the East, and images were cast out of almost all the churches, a great revolution happened at the death of the emperor Leo IV. by the administration falling into the hands of his widow the empress Irene, in the minority of her son. This princess (who was one of the worst of women) formed the design of restoring the use and worship of images in the East; which she communicated to pope Adrian, for his advice and assistance. When all matters were properly prepared, a council was summoned to meet at Constantinople, A. D. 786; but being prevented by a tumult from sitting in that city, it met the year after at Nice. This council (which consisted of about one hundred and fifty bishops, and is commonly called the second council of Nice) reversed the acts of the late council of Constantinople against images, and decreed both the use and adoration of them, with a few frivolous distinctions (26). The acts of this council were received with great joy at Rome, and a copy of them sent into France: where they did not meet with so favourable a reception; for though the churches of France allowed

(25) Lab. Coun. t. 6. col. 1661.

(26) Du Pin, Eccles. Hist. cent. 8.



the use, they prohibited the worship of images, with great strictness. Charlemagne king of France put these acts into the hands of a select number of bishops; who drew up an elaborate confutation of them, in four books, which were published in the king's name, and are commonly called the *Caroline books* (27). Charlemagne sent a copy of the canons of the council of Nice to his friend and ally Offa king of Mercia, to be communicated to the English bishops; by whom they were condemned, "as containing many things contrary to the true catholic faith, especially the worship of images, which the catholic church utterly detested and abhorred (28)." The English bishops employed their learned countryman Alcuinus to write against this council; and transmitted his book, with their own opinion, to the king of France (29). From this detail, it is sufficiently evident, that though images and pictures had long been used in the churches of France and England, as ornaments, and helps to memory, these churches, at the end of the eighth century, were not arrived at that degree of folly and impiety as to pay them any kind of worship.

The sale of relics was now become a gainful trade to the clergy, and especially to the monks, who were fortunate in making daily discoveries of the precious remains of some departed saint; which they soon converted into gold and silver. In this traffic they had all the opportunities they could desire of imposing counterfeit wares upon their customers, as it was no easy matter for the laity to distinguish the great toe of a saint from that of a sinner, after it had been some centuries in the grave. The place where the body of St. Alban, the protomartyr of Britain, lay, is said to have been discovered to Offa king of Mercia, in a vision, A. D. 794; and was taken up with much ceremony in the presence of three bishops, and an infinite multitude of people of all ranks, and lodged in a rich shrine, adorned with gold and precious stones. To do the greater honour to the memory of the holy martyr, Offa built a stately monastery at the place where his body was found, which he called by his name, *St. Alban's*, and in which he deposited his remains, enriching it with many lands and privileges (30).

Cent.  
VIII.

Sale of  
relics.

(27) Du Pin, Eccles. Hist. cent. 8.

(28) M. Westminster, ad an. 793.

(29) Id. ibid.

(30) M. Paris Vita Offæ, p. 26. W. Malmsb. l. i. c. 4.

Offa,

Cent.  
VIII.

Offa's  
journey to  
Rome.

Offa, who had been guilty of some very horrid crimes, became more and more superstitious as he advanced in years, and at length made a journey to Rome, where he squandered away a great deal of money, to procure the pardon of his sins. In particular, he made a grant of three hundred and sixty-five mancusles, being one mancus for each day in the year, to be disposed of by the pope to certain charitable and pious uses (31). This grant was afterwards converted into an annual tax upon the English nation, and demanded in the most imperious manner as a lawful tribute, and mark of subjection of the kingdom of England to the church of Rome (32).

The see of  
Litchfield  
reduced to  
its former  
state.

The see of Litchfield did not very long enjoy the honour of being an archbishopric. For king Offa dying soon after his return from Rome, A. D. 796, and his son Egfred in less than a year after, Kenulph, who succeeded this last prince, was prevailed upon to restore things to their former state. Some pretend, that he was brought to form this resolution by the address of Athelard archbishop of Canterbury, a prelate of great abilities; but others imagine, with greater probability, that he was chiefly influenced by political considerations; and that he did this great favour to the see of Canterbury, in order to gain the affections of the people of Kent, who had lately become his tributaries (33). However this may be, it is sufficiently evident, that king Kenulph, with the consent of the pope, reduced Adulphus archbishop of Litchfield to the state of a private bishop, and put him, and all the other bishops of his kingdom, again under the metropolitical authority of the see of Canterbury; though Adulphus was indulged in the empty honour of wearing the pall of an archbishop as long as he lived.

General  
state of re-  
ligion in  
Britain in  
this cen-  
tury.

Ignorance and superstition increased greatly in the church of England, as well as in other parts of the Christian world, in the course of the eighth century. Pilgrimages to Rome became far more frequent, and were attended with worse effects than formerly;—the rage of retiring into monasteries became more violent in persons of all ranks, to the ruin of military discipline, and

(31) *Anglia Sacra*, l. 1. p. 460.

(32) *Hen. Hunt*, l. 4. *R. Hoveden*, pars prior. *Inett's Church History*, c. 13.

(33) *Godwin de Preful. Anglie*, p. 67. *Inett's Church Hist.* c. 14.




of every useful art;—the clergy became more knavish and rapacious, and the laity more abject and stupid, than in any former period. Of this the trade of relics, which can never be carried on but between knaves and fools, is a sufficient evidence. The number of holidays, and of childish and trifling ceremonies, which are equally pernicious to honest industry and rational religion, were very much increased in the course of this dark age. As the Britons, Scots, and Picts, had little or no intercourse with Rome in this period, it is probable, that superstition had not made such rapid progress amongst them as amongst the English. But we know so little of the ecclesiastical history of these three nations in this century, that we can produce nothing of certainty and importance on that subject, unless the conversion of the Scots and Picts to the Roman rule in celebrating Easter, which happened in this century, can be called important.

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#### SECTION IV.

*The history of religion in Great Britain, from A. D. 800, to A. D. 900.*

**A**THELARD archbishop of Canterbury took a journey to Rome, A. D. 801, to obtain the formal consent of the pope to the reunion of the province of Litchfield to that of Canterbury. He met with a very favourable reception, and easily obtained every thing he desired, as it was one part of the papal policy to encourage applications to Rome, from all parts, and on all occasions. The pope, to shew how highly he was pleased with Kenulph king of Mercia (who had wrote him a very respectful letter, accompanied with a present of one hundred and twenty manusses), and with the archbishop, who had paid him a visit, sent an answer to the king; in which that prince, and his primate, are flattered at a most unconscionable rate, and loaded with the most extravagant

**Cent. IX.**  **travagant praises.** He calls the king his most dear, most excellent, and most sweet son; and tells him that the archbishop was such an admirable prelate, that he was able to bring all the souls in his province from the very bottom of hell into the port of heaven. (1).

Council of  
Clove-  
shoos.

Athelard, after his return from Rome with this curious letter, summoned a council to meet at Cloveshoos, A. D. 803; at which the decree of the pope, for restoring the see of Canterbury to all its ancient rights, was confirmed with great solemnity, and everlasting damnation denounced against all who should hereafter attempt to tear the coat of Christ, i. e. to divide the province of Canterbury (2). The archbishop laid another decree of the pope's, against admitting laymen to the government of monasteries, before this council; which was also confirmed, and subscribed by him and his twelve suffragans, with several abbots and presbyters (3). This last decree was designed to put a stop to a practice which had long prevailed, of noblemen having the government of the monasteries, and their ladies of the nunneries, on their estates, and to put those foundations entirely into the hands of ecclesiastics; by which a great accession, both of power and wealth, accrued to the church.

Council o  
Ceale-  
hythe.

Athelard did not long survive the restoration of his see to its ancient splendour; but dying A. D. 807, was succeeded by Wulfred, who had been a monk of Christ's church in Canterbury (4). This prelate convened a council of all the bishops, and many of the abbots and presbyters of his province, at Ceale-hythe, July 27, A. D. 816; at which Kenulph king of Mercia, with the great men of his kingdom, were present. This council, in the preamble to its canons, is said to have been called in the name, and by the authority of Jesus Christ, the supreme head of the church; and the design of it is said to have been, that the presidents of the sacred order, or bishops, might treat with the abbots, priests, and deacons, concerning what was necessary and useful for the churches; which seems to intimate, that these inferior clergy were constituent members of this

(1) Spelman Concil. t. 1. p. 322.

(2) Id. p. 324.

(3) Id. *ibid.*

(4) Godwin de Præful. Angl. p. 68.



council (5). The canons of this council are eleven in number; and some of them contain several curious particulars concerning the state of religion in the church of England at this time. As the building of parochial churches was now become frequent, the second canon prescribes the manner of their consecration, which is to be performed only by the bishop of the diocese, who is to bless the holy water, and sprinkle it on all things with his own hands, according to the directions in the book of rites. He is then to consecrate the eucharist, and to deposit it, together with the relics, in the repository provided for them. If no relics can be procured, the consecrated elements may be sufficient, because they are the body and blood of Christ. Every bishop in consecrating a church is commanded to have the picture of the saint to whom the church is dedicated painted on the wall, or on a board (6). From the fourth canon it appears, that the English bishops at this time, not only enjoyed their episcopal jurisdiction over all the monasteries and nunneries in their dioceses in its full extent, but had also authority to appoint the abbots and abbesses, with the consent of the members of these societies; a proof that all the exemptions from episcopal jurisdiction, said to have been procured from the pope by several monasteries before this time, are mere forgeries. By the fifth canon, we discover, that the members of this council had a most violent aversion to the Scotch clergy; for they decree, that no Scotsman shall be allowed to baptize, to say mass, to give the eucharist to the people, or perform any part of the sacerdotal office; because (says the canon) it is not known by whom these Scotsmen were ordained, or whether they were ordained or not, since they came from a country where there was no metropolitan, and where very little regard was paid to other orders. By the sixth canon, the decrees of former councils which have been signed with the sign of the cross, are declared to be inviolable. By the seventh, bishops and abbots are discharged from alienating any of their lands for more than one life, except it be to preserve themselves from famine, from slavery, or from the depredations of the enemy; by which is meant the Danes, who about this time grievously infested the coasts of England, and

Cent. IX.

(5) Spel. Con. t. i. p. 328.

(6) Id. ibid.

were

Cent. IX. were peculiarly terrible to the clergy. The tenth prescribes what offices are to be performed at the death of a bishop for the repose of his soul, viz. that the tenth part of all his moveable effects, both without and within doors, shall be given to the poor;—that all his English slaves shall be set at liberty;—that at the founding of the signal in the several parish churches, the people of the parish shall repair to the church, and there say thirty psalms for the soul of the deceased;—that every bishop and abbot shall cause six hundred psalms to be sung, and one hundred and twenty masses to be celebrated, and shall set at liberty three slaves, and give each of them three shillings;—that all the servants of God shall fast one day;—and that for thirty days immediately after divine service in every church, seven belts of pater-nosters shall be sung for him (7). These good bishops did certainly right to provide for the repose of their souls after death; but whether this was the most effectual way of doing it, is not quite so clear. By the last canon of this council, priests are commanded to use dipping, and not sprinkling, in the celebration of baptism. Several other councils were held under this primate; but as they were convened rather for terminating private disputes about the patrimony of the church, than for making general laws and regulations for its government, they merit little attention (8).

The clergy cruelly treated by the Danes. Wulfred archbishop of Canterbury died A.D. 830, and Theogildus abbot of Christ's church was chosen in his room; who survived his predecessor only about three months, and was succeeded by Celnoth deacon of the same church (9). In the time of this primate, the heptarchy ended, and the English monarchy was established by the illustrious Egbert king of the West-Saxons; though some princes after this bore the title of kings, and enjoyed some degree of authority, in Mercia, Northumberland, and other states. This union of the several English states into one potent kingdom was in many respects a happy event; and particularly to the church; because the clergy were thereby delivered from the great inconveniency of being subject to different, and often

(7) Those belts or girdles had studs for numbering the pater-nosters, as the rosaries or strings of beads do at present.

(8) Spel. Concil. t. i. p. 331—336.


(9) Godwin de Prælat. Angl. p. 68.

contending sovereigns. But the invasions of the Danes, Cent. IX. which about this time became more frequent and formidable than they had been before, more than overbalanced this advantage, and involved the English clergy in the most deplorable calamities. For the Danes being Pagans, as well as savages, and finding the monasteries, in which the clergy generally resided, better stored with booty and provisions than other places, never failed to plunder them when it was in their power. In those calamitous times, therefore, we cannot expect to meet with many councils assembled for making ecclesiastical laws and regulations. Great numbers of the clergy were put to the sword, or buried in the ruins of their monasteries; and the mildest fate they could expect when they fell into the hands of the Danes was to be sold for slaves. This made many of the monks abandon a profession which exposed them defenceless to so many dangers; some of them becoming soldiers, and others pursuing other ways of life. Those who still adhered to their profession after the destruction of the monasteries in which they had resided, retired into country villages, and there performed the duties of their function to the people of the neighbourhood. By this means the destruction of the monasteries, and dispersion of the clergy by the Danes, became the occasion of the building of many parish-churches, of which there were but very few in England before this time. This dispersion of the clergy was productive also of a very important change in their manners and way of life. When great numbers of them had formerly lived together in one monastery, few of them were married, because a collegiate life is on many accounts unfavourable to matrimony; but after they were dispersed, and blended with the people, they generally embraced a married life, as most convenient and comfortable in their situation (10). These observations are so undeniably true, that before the end of this century there was hardly a monastery or a monk, and but few unmarried clergymen in England.

Ethelwolf, the eldest surviving son of Egbert, the first monarch of England, who succeeded his father in the throne A. D. 837, had been designed for the church, and was actually a subdeacon in the cathedral of Win-

*Ethelwolf's grant to the church.*

(10) Inett's Church History, c. 17:

Cent. IX.  chester, if we may believe the author quoted below (11), when his father died. This prince did not forget his former friends and brethren of the clergy after his advancement to the throne, but continued to give them many substantial marks of his favour; of which the most considerable was, his famous grant of the tenth of all his lands to the church. The Christian clergy in England, as well as in other countries, began pretty early to claim the tenth of every thing, as the proportion settled by the Levitical law for the maintenance of the ministers of religion; but it required a long time, and many laws, both of church and state, to make this claim effectual. In the seventh and eighth centuries, the English clergy had been supported,—by the produce of the lands which had been given to the church by kings, and other great men,—by a church scot or tax of one Saxon penny on every house that was worth thirty Saxon pence of yearly rent,—and by the voluntary oblations of the people. These funds, in times of plenty and tranquillity, were abundantly sufficient; but in those times of war and confusion, when their houses were burnt, and their slaves, who cultivated their lands, killed, or carried away by the Danes, when the church-scot could not be regularly levied, and when the voluntary oblations of the people failed, the clergy were reduced to great distress and indigence. Ethelwolf, who was a religious prince, and seems to have placed his chief hopes of being preserved from that destruction with which he was threatened by the Danes in the prayers of the church, was desirous of delivering the clergy from their present distress, and of providing more ample and certain funds for their future support. With this view, he called an assembly of all the great men of his hereditary kingdom of Wessex, both of the clergy and laity, at Winchester, in November A. D. 844; and, with their consent, made a solemn grant to the church of the tenth part of all the lands belonging to the crown, free from all taxes and impositions of every kind, even from the three obligations, of building bridges, fortifying and defending castles, and marching out on military expeditions (12). It was no doubt intended that this royal grant should be imitated, and probably it was imitated, by the nobility. In re-

(11) *Anglia Sacra*, t. i. p. 200.(12) *Id. ibid.*



turn for this noble donation, the clergy were obliged to perform some additional duties, viz. to meet with their people every Wednesday in the church, and there to sing fifty psalms, and celebrate two masses, one for king Ethelwolf, and another for the nobility, who had consented to this grant (13). What immediate benefit the clergy reaped from this donation, we are not well informed; though it is probable, that it was not very great, as a regulation of this kind could hardly be carried into execution in those distracted times.

Though the presence of a prince with his people was never more necessary than in the reign of Ethelwolf, when his territories were every moment in danger of being invaded by the most cruel and destructive foes; yet this prince, prompted by the prevailing superstition of that age, left his kingdom in great confusion, and went to Rome, A. D. 854; where he spent much money in presents to the pope, the clergy, and the churches (14).

After his return from Rome, he enlarged his former grant to the church, by extending it to the other kingdoms which now composed the English monarchy. This was done in a great council at Winchester, A. D. 855; at which, besides Ethelwolf, Beorred, the tributary king of Mercia, and Edmund, the tributary king of East-Anglia, the two archbishops of Canterbury and York, with all the other bishops, the nobility, and chief clergy of England, were present (15). To give the greater force and solemnity to this donation, the charter containing the grant of it was presented by king Ethelwolf, in the presence of the whole assembly, on the altar of St. Peter the apostle, in the cathedral of Winchester; and all the bishops were commanded to send a copy of it to every church in their respective dioceses (16). But notwithstanding all these solemnities, we have good reason to believe the invention of this famous grant was in a great measure frustrated, by the vague indeterminate strain in which it was conceived, and the deplorable confusions which soon after followed.

England was a scene of so much misery and confusion during the short reigns of Ethelwolf's three eldest sons, from A. D. 857 to A. D. 871, and the first seven years

(13) *Anglia Sacra*, t. 1. p. 200.

(14) *Chron. Saxon.* A. D. 854.

(15) *Spel. Concil.* t. 1. p. 348.

(16) *Id. ibid.*

**Cent. IX.** of the reign of his youngest son Alfred the Great, that little attention was given to ecclesiastical affairs. In this period the few remaining monasteries which had escaped the former ravages of the Danes, were destroyed, and their wretched inhabitants put to the sword, or burnt in the flames which consumed the places of their abode (17). But after the glorious victory which Alfred the Great obtained over the Danes A. D. 878, some stop was put to the horrid cruelties of these barbarians, and to the intolerable sufferings of the English clergy. For by the treaty of peace which followed that victory, it was stipulated, that Guthrum king of the Danes, and such of his followers as chose to remain in England, should embrace the Christian religion; and that those who were not willing to comply with that condition should immediately quit the kingdom. In consequence of this article, Guthrum, with about thirty of his principal officers, were baptized in the presence of king Alfred; and their example was soon after imitated by the greatest part of their followers (18). These new Christians had lands assigned them in the north of England; where they settled, and in time became peaceable and useful subjects. To secure the attachment of these new converts to the religion which they had embraced, king Alfred made certain laws for the regulation of their conduct, to which Guthrum and the other Danish chieftains gave their consent. By the first of these laws, the Danes are commanded to abandon Paganism, and continue in the faith and worship of one true God. By the second, a heavy fine is imposed on those who should apostatize from Christianity, and relapse into Paganism. By the rest of these laws, which are seventeen in number, the several vices to which the Danes were most addicted, are prohibited; the payment of tithes, the religious observation of the Lord's day, and of other festivals, are commanded; and several directions are given, both to the clergy and laity (19).

**Ecclesiastical laws of Alfred the Great.** Besides the above constitutions, which were chiefly designed for the Danes, and the English among whom they lived, Alfred formed another body of laws for his other subjects, of which some related to the church. The

(17) *Israel's Hist. Colland.*

(18) *Alfred de Vita Hist. ed. p. 10.*

(19) *Spel. Concil. t. i. p. 375.*

introduction to these laws consists of a copy of the ten Cent. IX. commandments, in which the second commandment, against the making and worshipping of images, is omitted; but to make up the number, after the ninth, the following short one is added, "Make thou not gods of gold or of silver:" a precept which very few were able to transgress. This omission of the second commandment shews, that images, which had been introduced into the church as ornaments, and helps to memory, were now become the objects of adoration: a change which might easily have been foreseen. Alfred also adopted the canons of the apostolical council of Jerusalem, recorded Acts xv. 29. into his ecclesiastical laws; and greatly magnifies that excellent precept of Christ, To do unto others as we would have others to do unto us. It is unnecessary to give a very particular account of the rest of these constitutions, as they contain few novelties. From one of them we learn, that about this time the clergy fell upon a curious device to raise the devotion of the people, and give a mysterious solemnity to the rites of religion, in the holy time of lent, by drawing a curtain before the altar when they celebrated mass. But the people, it seems, did not like to be kept on the outside of the curtain, and were apt to turn it aside, or pull it down; which is therefore prohibited under a severe penalty. By another we are informed, that servants, but not slaves, were allowed forty-two days in the year to work for themselves, and not for their masters (20).

One of the first cares of the illustrious Alfred, after he had restored peace and prosperity to his afflicted country, was, to repair the ruined churches and monasteries, and even to build new ones. But many of the old English monks having perished in the late troubles, and the rising generation having contracted an aversion to that way of life, from the dreadful tales they had heard of their sufferings, he was obliged to bring monks from France and other foreign countries (21). When the peace was better established, and their fears of the future invasions of the Danes abated, many of the clergy who had abandoned their monasteries to preserve their lives, returned to the places from whence they had fled, took possession of their lands, and began to repair their

Alfred re-  
builds mo-  
nasteries.

(20) Spel. Concil. t. i. p. 371.

(21) Alerius Vita Elned. p. 18.

Cent. IX. churches and habitations. But many of these clergymen having married in their retreats, they brought their wives and children with them when they returned to their monasteries; by which means the abbeys of England, in the end of this and the beginning of the next century, were generally possessed by a kind of secular or married monks (22). This, as we shall soon see, became the occasion of long and violent contentions in the church of England. Alfred the Great, after he had restored peace and good order to his country, ended his glorious life and reign in the last year of the ninth century.

Ecclesiastical history of the Britons.

It would be improper to swell this work with a laborious collection of the unconnected scraps of the ecclesiastical history of the Britons, Scots, and Picts, in this century; out of which it is quite impossible to form any thing like a continued narration, supported by proper evidence—All that we know with certainty of the state of religion among the ancient Britons in this period is, that all those who preserved their civil liberty, preserved also their religious independency; and none of them were in communion with, or in subjection to, the church of England, who were not subject to some English prince. By living in this sequestered state, without much communication with other churches, they still retained, for the most part, their ancient usages, and were unacquainted with many innovations which had been imported from Rome into the church of England.

Of the Scots and Picts.

The Scots and Picts were very much in the same circumstances with the Britons in this respect. Ever since the violent disputes between the Scots and English of the Roman communion, about the time of keeping Easter, and the retreat of the Scotch clergy out of England, there had been a violent animosity between the churches of England and Scotland. This animosity was very strong in this century, as appears from the fifth canon of the council of Ceale-hythe, A. D. 816; which decrees, that no Scotch priest shall be allowed to perform any duty of his function in England (23). The Scots and Picts were instructed and governed by their own clergy; who being educated at home, and having little intercourse with foreign nations, retained much of the plainness and simplicity of the primitive times in

(22) *Anglia Sacra*, t. 1. p. 602. (23) *Spel. Concil.* t. 1. p. 329.



their forms of worship. These clergy were called *Kul-dees*, both before and after this period: a name which some derive from the two Latin words, *Cultores Dei*, and others from the cells or cells in which they lived (24). They were a kind of presbyters, who lived in small societies, and travelled over the neighbouring countries, preaching, and administering the sacraments. In each of these cells there was one who had some kind of superintendency over the rest, managed their affairs, and directed their missions; but whether or not he enjoyed the title and authority of a bishop in this period, is not certainly known. The council of Ceale-hythe seems to have suspected that he did not; for the chief reasons assigned by that council for refusing to keep communion with these Scotch Kuldees were,—That they had no metropolitans amongst them,—paid little regard to other orders,—and that the council did not know by whom they were ordained, *i. e.* whether they were ordained by bishops or not (25). The rectors or bishops of the several cells of Kuldees were both chosen, and ordained, or consecrated, by the members of these societies; which was probably the very thing with which the council of Ceale-hythe was dissatisfied. When the cells or monasteries of Scotland came to be enlarged, better built, and better endowed, they were long after this possessed by these Kuldees, or secular clergy, who had the privilege of choosing the bishops in those places where bishops sees were established (26).

The only bishopric that was founded in Scotland in the ninth century was that of St. Andrew's; whose first bishop, named *Adrian*, was killed by the Danes in the isle of May, A. D. 872, and succeeded by Kellach, the second bishop of that see (27). The other bishops of Scotland in this century, and in former times, were not fixed to any particular diocese, and performed all the offices of their functions in all places without distinction (28). The number of these itinerant unsettled bishops was probably very small, as our most diligent antiquaries have not been able to collect the names of above ten or twelve of them in the space of six centuries; and of these few some were foreigners, sent into Scotland on particular occasions, as *Regulus*, *Palladius*,

State of  
the Scotch  
bishops.

(24) Boeth. Hist. Scot. l. 6. Camb. Britain. col. 1468.

(25) Spel. Concil. t. i. p. 329. (26) Boeth. Hist. Scot. l. 10.

(27) Spottiswood's Church Hist. p. 25, 26. (28) Boeth. l. 10.

Cent. IX. Servanus ; others were Scotchmen, who were bishops in foreign countries, as Wiro, Plachelmus, &c. ; and others were undeniably only superintendants of societies of Kuldees, as Columba, Adamnan, &c. (29).

Scotch  
councils.

We may very reasonably suppose, that the kings both of the Scots and Picts held several councils in this and the preceding centuries, for the regulation of ecclesiastical affairs ; but of these no monuments are now remaining, except some faint vestiges of a council or assembly held by Kenneth Macalpin, the first monarch of the Scots and Picts, A. D. 850 (30). In this council several civil and ecclesiastical laws are said to have been made. By one of these last it is decreed, that altars, churches, cells, oratories, images of saints, priests, and all persons in holy orders, shall be held in great veneration. By another it is ordained, that all fasts, festivals, vigils, holidays, and ceremonies of every kind, which human piety had decreed to be kept in honour of king Christ, and his holy militia, shall be strictly observed. By a third it is declared to be a capital crime to do the least injury to a priest, either by word or deed (31). But we have good reason to suspect the genuineness and antiquity of these canons, which were probably the work of a later age, when superstition and priestcraft had made greater progress in Scotland (32).

## SECTION V.

*The history of Religion in Great Britain, from A. D. 900, to A. D. 1566.*

Cent. X.

Character  
of the  
tenth cen-  
tury.

THE tenth century (which is commonly called *the age of lead*) was the most dark and dismal period of that long night of ignorance and superstition in which Europe was involved, after the fall of the Roman empire.

(29) See the table of Scotch bishops at the end of Spottiswood's Church History.

(30) Fernan. l. 4. c. 8. Boeth. l. 10.

(31) Spelm. Con. p. 142.

(32) Sir David Dalrymple's Historical Memorials, p. 2. note.

It is difficult to determine whether the impudence of the clergy, or the credulity of the laity, were most remarkable in those unhappy times; but it is certain, that the former could hardly invent any thing too absurd for the latter to believe. Cent. X.

England, which towards the end of the last century had been illuminated by some faint rays of knowledge, and enjoyed a short interval of tranquillity, under the influence of the illustrious Alfred, in the beginning of this sunk into the deepest darkness, and was involved in the greatest confusion. This arose from the wars occasioned by a disputed succession,—from the frequent revolts of the Danes settled in England,—and from the no less frequent invasions of their countrymen from abroad. In the midst of so many wars, it is no wonder that the interests of learning and religion were too much neglected. State of religion in England.

It was perhaps owing to this that king Edward the Elder, the son and successor of Alfred, allowed some bishoprics to continue vacant several years; for which, it is pretended, pope Formosus laid both him and his kingdom under an interdict, A. D. 905 (1). This story of the interdict, it must be confessed, is attended with such difficulties as render it very doubtful, if not quite incredible. Pope Formosus was in his grave eight years before the time of this pretended interdict; and the bishops of Rome had not then become such cruel audacious tyrants as to deprive whole kingdoms of the means of salvation, for the fault of one man (2). It is not improbable, that king Edward received an admonition from Rome; which the monkish historians in succeeding ages magnified into an interdict. Story of an interdict.

However this may be, that prince, as soon as the exigencies of his affairs permitted, not only filled up all the vacant bishoprics in his kingdom of Wessex, but erected new ones, at Wells, at Kirton in Devonshire, and at Padstow in Cornwall; and Plegmund, archbishop of Canterbury, consecrated no fewer than seven bishops in one day, A. D. 909, viz. Fridstan of Winchester, Werestan of Shereburn, Kenulp of Dorchester, Beornock of Selfey, Athelm of Wells, Eadulph of Kirton, and Athelstan of Padstow (3). Edward fills the vacant sees, and erects new ones.

(1) W. Malmf. l. 2. p. 26.

(2) See Inett's Church Hist. c. 18.

(3) Anglia Sacra, t. 1. p. 554, 555.

Cent. X. The Danes of East-Anglia and Northumberland, who, with their leader Guthrum, had submitted to king Alfred, and had embraced the Christian religion, remained tolerably faithful to their new religion, and to their new sovereign, during the life of that great prince; but after his death they apostatized from Christianity, as well as rebelled against his son and successor Edward. But having reduced these apostates and rebels to the necessity of submitting to his authority A. D. 909, he compelled them to return to the profession of the Christian religion, and to the obedience of those laws which his father had prescribed to their ancestors about thirty years before (4).

Council of  
Gratanlea.

We meet with few ecclesiastical transactions of importance for near twenty years after this; when a great council was assembled at Gratanlea, A. D. 928, by king Athelstan, in which Wulphelm archbishop of Canterbury presided. This was one of those mixed assemblies, so frequent in the Saxon times, consisting of all the great men, both of the clergy and laity, in which both civil laws and ecclesiastical canons were made. For besides the archbishop and other bishops, we are told, that a great number of nobles and wise men, who had been called by king Athelstan, were present at this great synod; and in the acts of it we find civil and ecclesiastical matters sometimes blended together in the same law (5). The first canon of this council respects the payment of tithes, and is couched in the following terms:—"I king Athelstan, by the advice of Wulphelm, my archbishop, and of my other bishops, strictly command and charge you all my reeves, in all parts of my kingdom, in the name of God and his saints, and as you value my favour, to pay the tithes, both of the cattle and corn, on all my lands; and I further ordain, that all my bishops and aldermen shall pay the tithes of their lands; and that they shall give it in charge to all who are under their jurisdiction to do the same. All this I command to be carried into execution by the time appointed, which is the day of the decollation of John the Baptist." From this canon it appears, that the famous grant of king Ethelwolf, of the tenth part of his lands to the church, if it did not

(4) Spel. Concil. p. 390. Wilkin Concil. t. i. p. 205.

(5) Spel. Concil. t. i. p. 401.



originally mean the tenth of their produce, was now understood in this sense, either by tacit consent and custom, or by some law which is now lost. It is further evident from this canon, to which a pathetic exhortation is subjoined, that all former laws for the payment of tithes had been ineffectual; and we shall soon see cause to think, that this one was not much better obeyed.—By the second canon, in one of the copies of this council, it is decreed, that the church-scot shall still be paid where it is due (6). From whence we may learn, that the clergy did not relinquish any of their former revenues when they obtained the grant of tithes. In the third canon, the king, for the forgiveness of his sins, and salvation of his soul, commands each of his reeves to maintain one poor Englishman from every two of his farms, by giving him one amber of meal, one hog, or one ram, worth four pence, every month, and one mantle, or thirty pence, annually, for his clothing. By two of these canons, the various religious ceremonies are prescribed, which were to be observed in performing the several kinds of ordeal, which shall be more particularly described hereafter (7). By the ninth canon it is decreed, that fairs and markets shall not be kept on the Lord's day. The tenth enumerates both the spiritual and secular duties of bishops; which are such as these,—That they should teach their clergy how they ought to act in all circumstances;—to promote peace and concord, and co-operate with such secular judges as were friends to justice;—to take care that oaths be rightly administered, and the ordeals duly performed;—to visit their flocks, and not suffer the devil to destroy any of their sheep;—to keep the standards of the weights and measures of their respective dioceses, and take care that all conformed to these standards;—to be present with the aldermen in their courts, to prevent any sprouts of pravity from springing up;—not to permit the powerful to oppress the weak, or masters to use their slaves ill;—and that they should fix the measures of work to be performed by slaves in all their dioceses. By the twelfth canon it is decreed, that fifty psalms shall be sung for the king every Friday in every monastery and cathedral church (8). With these ecclesiastical laws, several others of a civil na-

(6) Spel. Concil. t. 1. p. 402.

(7) See chap. 3.

(8) Spel. Concil. t. 1. p. 402.

Cent. X. ture are intermixed, which will be more properly considered in another place (9).

Death of  
archbishop  
Wulph-  
elm, and  
succession  
of Odo.

Though Athelstan was almost constantly engaged in war, he held at least four other councils, at the four following places, viz. Exeter, Feversham, Thunderfield, and London; but the canons of all these councils are either lost, or so blended with those of Gratanlea, that they cannot be distinguished (10). Wulphelm archbishop of Canterbury died A. D. 934, and was succeeded in that high station by Odo bishop of Shereburn; whose history is remarkable enough, without the thundering miracles with which it is adorned by his biographer (11). He was the eldest son of a noble and wealthy Dane settled in East-Anglia, by whom, being a bigoted Pagan, he was disinherited, and turned out of doors, for frequenting the Christian churches when he was a boy. In this extremity, he took shelter in the family of Athelm, an English nobleman of the first rank; who was so charmed with his spirit and ingenuity, that he treated him with parental tenderness, and gave him a learned education. Having entered into holy orders, by his own merit, and the interest of his patron Athelm, he passed rapidly through the inferior stations in the church, and was ordained a priest before the age prescribed by the canons, and not long after consecrated bishop of Shereburn. In this office he behaved with the greatest piety and prudence; and being of a martial spirit, he attended his sovereign king Athelstan in the field, and contributed not a little to the gaining the great victory of Brunanburgh over the Danes. On the death of Wulphelm, all the world turned their eyes on the learned, pious, and valiant bishop of Shereburn, as the fittest person to fill the vacant chair; of which he at length accepted, after having made a few wry faces and very frivolous objections. His chief objection, if we may believe the monkish historians, was, that he was not a monk, as all the former archbishops had been. But we can hardly suppose this prelate so ignorant of church-history, as to make this objection, which was probably invented for him long after his death, by those cloystered annalists, who neglected no opportunity of magnifying their own

(9) Chap. 3.

(10) Spel. Concil. p. 407.

(11) Anglia Sacra, t. 2. p. 78.

order. However this may be, though Odo's zeal for religion seems still to have been sincere and fervent, his bold aspiring spirit, no longer under any restraint, made him act the primate with a very high hand. This appears, not only from his actions, especially in his old age, but also from his famous pastoral letter to the clergy and people of his province (commonly called *the constitutions of Odo*), which was published A. D. 943; in which he speaks in a very magisterial tone: "I strictly command and charge," says he, "that no man presume to lay any tax on the possessions of the clergy, who are the sons of God, and the sons of God ought to be free from all taxes in every kingdom.—If any man dares to disobey the discipline of the church in this particular, he is more wicked and impudent than the soldiers who crucified Christ.—I command the king, the princes, and all in authority, to obey, with great humility, the archbishops and bishops; for they have the keys of the kingdom of heaven (12)," &c.

Besides these constitutions, that were published by the sole authority of the archbishop, there were several ecclesiastical canons made in a great council, both of the clergy and laity, which was held by king Edmund, at London, A. D. 944. By the first of these canons it is decreed, that all who are in holy orders, from whom the people of God were to expect a virtuous example, should live chastely; and that those who violated this canon should forfeit all their goods, and be denied Christian burial. This canon was perhaps aimed against the secular canons or monks, who were generally married, and designed as a prelude to those violent efforts that were soon after made to dispossess them of their monasteries on that account. By the second canon of this council, all are commanded to pay their tithes, their church-scot, and alms-fee, under the penalty of excommunication. From this we learn, that besides tithes there were several other dues claimed by the clergy. By one canon, uncleanness with a nun is declared to be an equal crime with adultery, and subjected to the same penalties. By another, bishops are commanded to repair and decorate the churches on their own lands at their own expence, and to admonish the king to do the same to other

Council of  
London.

(12) Spel. Concil. t. 1. p. 416. Wilkin Concil. t. 1. p. 212.

churches.

Cent. X. churches. Though Christianity had been now long estab-  
 lished in England, Paganism was far from being quite  
 extirpated, especially amongst the Danes settled in East-  
 Anglia and Northumberland; and therefore there were  
 laws made in almost every ecclesiastical synod against the  
 use of Pagan rites, which were often practised even by  
 those who were a kind of nominal Christians. By the  
 last canon of this council, those who were guilty of per-  
 jury, or of using Pagan rites and ceremonies, are to be  
 excommunicated (13).

Canons of  
 the North-  
 umbrian  
 priests.

About the middle of this century, as it is most pro-  
 bable, an ecclesiastical synod of the province of York  
 was held; in which the fines to be paid by the clergy,  
 for various offences, and violations of the canons of the  
 church, are ascertained. To secure the payment of these  
 fines, every clergyman, at his admission into orders, was  
 obliged to find twelve bondsmen. As the province of  
 York, or kingdom of Northumberland, was at this time  
 chiefly inhabited by Danes, these fines are all to be paid  
 in the Danish oras, or ounces of silver; and considering  
 the great scarcity of that precious metal, they are very  
 severe, as will appear from a few examples: "If a  
 "priest celebrate mass in an unhallowed house, let him  
 "pay twelve oras. If a priest celebrate mass on an un-  
 "hallowed altar, let him pay twelve oras. If a priest  
 "consecrate the sacramental wine in a wooden chalice,  
 "let him pay twelve oras. If a priest celebrate mass  
 "without wine, let him pay twelve oras." These fines,  
 and many others, were to be paid to the bishop of the  
 diocese. This seems to have been a scheme to bring the  
 discipline of the church to a perfect conformity with the  
 laws of the state, which set a fixed price on all crimes;  
 and was probably invented by some artful prelate, to make  
 the delinquencies of his clergy the means of his wealth (14.)

History of  
 St. Dun-  
 stan.


It is now time to introduce the celebrated St. Dunstan  
 to the acquaintance of our readers, who was already  
 become very famous, and soon after acted a most memo-  
 rable part, both in the affairs of church and state. In  
 doing which, we shall give them a short specimen of the  
 monkish manner of writing the lives of saints. Dunstan  
 was descended from a noble family in Wesssex, and edu-  
 cated in the abbey of Glastonbury. Here he studied so

(13) Spel. Concil. t. 1. p. 420. Wilkin Concil. t. 1. p. 214.

(14) Wilkin Concil. t. 1. p. 218. Johnson's Canons, vol. 1.  
 A. D. 950.



hard, that it threw him into a violent fever, which Cent. X.  
brought him to the very point of death. When the whole family were standing about his bed, dissolved in tears, and expecting every moment to see him expire, an angel came from heaven in a dreadful storm, and gave him a medicine, which restored him to perfect health in a moment. Dunstan immediately started from his bed, and run with all his speed towards the church, to return thanks for his recovery; but the devil met him by the way, surrounded by a great multitude of black dogs, and endeavoured to obstruct his passage. This would have frightened some boys; but it had no such effect upon Dunstan; who pronouncing a sacred name, and brandishing his stick, put the devil and all his dogs to flight. The church-doors being shut, an angel took him in his arms, conveyed him through an opening in the roof, and set him softly down on the floor, where he performed his devotions. After his recovery, he pursued his studies with the greatest ardour, and soon became a perfect master in philosophy, divinity, music, painting, writing, sculpture, working in gold, silver, brass, and iron, &c. When he was still very young, he entered into holy orders, and was introduced by his uncle Athelm, archbishop of Canterbury, to king Athelstan; who, charmed with his person and accomplishments, retained him in his court, and employed him in many great affairs. At leisure hours he used to entertain the king and his courtiers with playing on his harp, or some other musical instrument; and now and then he wrought a miracle, which gained him great admiration. His old enemy the devil was much offended at this, and prompted some envious courtiers to persuade the king, that his favourite was a magician; which that prince too readily believed. Dunstan, discovering by the king's countenance that he had lost his favour, and resolving to resign, rather than be turned out, retired from court to another uncle, who was bishop of Winchester. This good prelate prevailed upon his nephew to forsake the world, and become a monk; after which he retired to a little cell built against the church-wall of Glastonbury. Here he slept, studied, prayed, meditated, and sometimes amused himself with forging several useful things in brass and iron. One evening, as he was working very busily at his forge, the devil, putting on the appearance

Cent. X.  ance of a man, thrust his head in at the window of his cell, and asked him to make something or other for him. Dunstan was so intent upon his work, that he made no answer; on which the devil began to swear and talk obscenely; which betrayed the lurking fiend. The holy blacksmith, putting up a secret ejaculation, pulled his tongs, which were red hot, out of the fire, seized the devil with them by the nose, and squeezed him with all his strength; which made his infernal majesty roar and scold at such a rate, that he awakened and terrified all the people for many miles around (15). This, it is presumed, will be thought a sufficient specimen of the monkish manner of writing history: it is now proper to pursue the story of Dunstan in a more rational strain.

Continuation of the history of St. Dunstan.

This extraordinary person was recalled to court by king Edmund A. D. 941; who bestowed upon him the rich abbey of Glanstonbury, which, for his sake, he honoured with many peculiar privileges (16). He enjoyed a very high degree of the favour of this prince during his short reign of six years; but he stood much higher in the favour of his brother and successor king Edred, to whom he was confessor, chief confident, and prime minister. He employed all his influence during this period of court-favour in promoting the interest of the monks of the Benedictine order, to which he belonged, and of which he was a most active and zealous patron. Having the treasures of these two princes, especially of the last, very much at his command, he lavished them away in building and endowing monasteries for these monks, because almost all the old monasteries were in possession of secular canons. Not contented with this, he persuaded Edred (who was a bigoted valetudinary) to bestow such immense treasures on the churches and monasteries by his last will, that the crown was stripped of its most valuable possessions, and left in a state of indigence (17).

Further continuation.

This conduct of Dunstan while he was in power, rendered him very odious to Edwi, who succeeded his uncle Edred A. D. 955; and his rude behaviour to himself, and his beloved queen Elgiva, raised the resentment of that prince so high, that he deprived him of all his

(15) *Anglia Sacra*, t. 2. p. 97.

(16) *W. Malmesb. l. 2. c. 7.* *Anglia Sacra*, t. 2. p. 100.

(17) *Inett's Church Hist.* vol. 1. p. 316.

preferments, and drove him into exile (18). The banishment of Dunstan, the great patron, or (as Malmfbury calls him) the prince of monks, was a severe blow to that order, who were expelled from several monasteries; which were made the impure stables (according to the same author) of the married clergy (19). But their sufferings were not of long continuance. For Edgar, the younger brother of Edwi, having raised a successful rebellion against his unhappy brother, and usurped all his dominions on the north side of the river Thames, recalled Dunstan, and gave him the bishopric of Worcester, A. D. 957 (20). From this moment he was the chief confident and prime minister of king Edgar, who became sole monarch of England A. D. 959, by the death of his elder brother Edwi.

Odo archbishop of Canterbury having died about two years before king Edwi, Elfin bishop of Winchester, by the influence of that prince, was translated to Canterbury; but died not long after in his way to Rome (21). On this second vacancy, Edwi procured the election of Brithelm bishop of Wells; who was hardly warm in his seat, when Edgar succeeded to his brother's dominions, and obliged the new archbishop (who was of a soft and gentle disposition) to relinquish his high station, and return to his former bishopric. This violence was practised by king Edgar, to make way for his favourite Dunstan; who was accordingly raised to be archbishop of Canterbury A. D. 960 (22). Being now possessed of the primacy, and assured of the royal support and assistance, he prepared to execute the grand design which he had long meditated, of compelling the secular canons to put away their wives, and become monks; or of driving them out, and introducing Benedictine monks in their room (23). With this view, he procured the promotion of Oswald to the see of Worcester, and of Ethelwald to that of Winchester; two prelates who were monks themselves, and animated with the most ardent zeal for the advancement of their order.

St. Dunstan, St. Oswald, and St. Ethelwald, the three great champions of the monks, and enemies of the married canons ejected.

(18) W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 7.

(19) Id. ibid.

(20) Anglia Sacra, t. 1. p. 107.

(21) Godwin de Præful. Ang. p. 73. (22) Id. ibid.

(23) Anglia Sacra, t. 1. p. 219.

Cent. X. married clergy, began the execution of their design, by endeavouring to persuade the secular canons in their cathedrals, and other monasteries, to put away their wives, and take the monastic vows and habits (24). But finding that these persuasions produced little or no effect, they proceeded to the most shameful acts of fraud and violence. St. Oswald (as we are told by a monkish historian) turned all the married canons out of his cathedral church of Worcester, not by direct force, but by a most holy and pious stratagem, which he hath not thought fit to mention (25). He expelled the married clergy out of seven other monasteries within his diocese, and filled them with monks, allowing those who were expelled a small pension for life, barely sufficient to keep them from starving (26). Ethelwald acted with still greater violence, if possible, towards the canons of his cathedral. For having secretly provided a sufficient number of monkish habits, he entered the church one day, followed by a number of servants carrying them, and, with a stern countenance, told the canons who were performing divine service, that they must instantly put on these habits, and take the vows, or be turned out. The poor canons pleaded hard for a little time to consider of this cruel alternative; but the unrelenting prelate would not allow them one moment. A few complied, and took the habits; but the far greatest number chose rather to become beggars and vagabonds, than forsake their wives and children; for which our monkish historians give them the most opprobrious names (27). To countenance these cruel tyrannical proceedings, Dunstan and his associates represented the married clergy as monsters of wickedness for cohabiting with their wives, magnified celibacy as the only state becoming the sanctity of the sacerdotal office, and propagated a thousand lies of miracles and visions to its honour; of which the reader may take the following specimen. A monk, named *Hoberht*, who had been appointed abbot of Pershore, a monastery out of which the secular canons had been turned by St. Oswald, was a most prodigious zealot for the monastic institutions; but in other respects of a very indifferent character. This abbot fell sick, and died; and

(24) *Anglia Sacra*, t. 2. p. 219.(25) *W. Malm. l. 2. c. 8.* (26) *Anglia Sacra*, t. 2. p. 200.(27) *Anglia Sacra*, t. 2. p. 219. *W. Malm. l. 2. c. 8.*



when all the monks of his own monastery, with Germanus abbot of Winchelcomb, and many others, were standing about his corpse, to their great astonishment, he raised himself up, and looked around him. All the monks were struck with terror, and fled, except Germanus; who asked his brother-abbot, What he had seen? and what had brought him back to life? To which the other answered, That he had been introduced into heaven by St. Benedict; that God had pardoned all his sins for the merits of his beloved darling Oswald bishop of Worcester; and had sent him back to acquaint the world, that Oswald was one of the greatest saints that ever lived. Being asked further by Germanus, What kind of figure St. Benedict made in heaven? how he was dressed? and how he was attended? he answered, That St. Benedict was one of the handsomest and best dressed saints in heaven, shining with precious stones, and attended by innumerable multitudes of monks and nuns, who were all perfect beauties (28). This, it must be confessed, was a very simple tale; but it was well enough calculated to answer the purposes for which it was invented, in that age of ignorance and credulity. By these and various other arts, Dunstan archbishop of Canterbury, Oswald bishop of Worcester, and Ethelwald bishop of Winchester, in the course of a few years, filled no fewer than forty-eight monasteries with monks of the Benedictine order (29).

Though Edgar the Peaceable was a very profligate prince, and stuck at nothing to gratify his own passions, he was, if possible, a greater persecutor of the married clergy than the three clerical tyrants above mentioned. To them he gave a formal commission, A. D. 969, to expel the married canons out of all the cathedrals and larger monasteries, promising to assist them in the execution of it with all his power (30). On this occasion he made a most flaming speech to the three commissioners, painting the manners of the married clergy in the most odious colours; calling upon them to exert all their power, in conjunction with him, to exterminate those abominable wretches who kept wives. "I know," says he, in the conclusion of his speech, "O holy father Dunstan! that you have not encouraged those criminal practices of the clergy. You have reasoned, intreated, threatened. From

Cent. X.  
King Edgar a great persecutor of the married canons.

(28) Anglia Sacra, t. 2. p. 201. (29) Id. ibid. p. 201.


(30) Hoveden. Annal. ad ann. 969.

Cent. X. “ words it is now time to come to blows. All the power  
 “ of the crown is at your command. Your brethren, the  
 “ venerable Ethelwald, and the most reverend Oswald,  
 “ will assist you. To you three I commit the execution  
 “ of this important work. Strike boldly;—drive those  
 “ irregular livers out of the church of Christ, and in-  
 “ troduce others, who will live according to rule (31).”  
 This furious champion for chastity had, some time  
 before the delivery of this harangue, debauched, or ra-  
 ther ravished, a nun, a young lady of noble birth and  
 great beauty; at which his holy father confessor  
 Dunstan was so much offended, that he enjoined him,  
 by way of penance, not to wear his crown for seven  
 years—to build a nunnery,—and to persecute the mar-  
 ried clergy with all his might (32): a strange way of  
 making atonement for his own libertinism, by depriving  
 others of their most natural rights and liberties.

Canons of K. Edgar. As king Edgar was very much under the influence of  
 his three favourite prelates, he paid great attention to ec-  
 cleastical affairs, and held several councils for the regu-  
 lation of them. In one of these councils, those sixty-se-  
 ven canons, commonly called *the canons of king Edgar*,  
 were enacted; in which there are not many things new,  
 or worthy of a place in history. By the eleventh of these  
 canons, every priest is commanded to learn and practise  
 some mechanic trade, and to teach it to all his appren-  
 tices for the priesthood. By the sixteenth, the clergy are  
 commanded to be at great pains to bring off their people  
 from the worship of trees, stones, and fountains, and  
 from many other Heathenish rites which are therein enu-  
 merated. By this it would appear, that many of the peo-  
 ple of England were but very imperfect Christians at this  
 time. The fifty-fourth recommends it to the clergy to be  
 very frequent and earnest in exhorting the people to pay  
 all their dues to the church honestly, and at the proper  
 time;—their plough-alms fifteen nights after Easter,—  
 their tithes of young animals at Pentecost,—their tithes  
 of corn at All-saints—their Peter-pence at Lammas,—  
 and their church-scot at Martinmas. To these canons  
 is subjoined a penitential, which some think was com-  
 posed by St. Dunstan, and requires penitents to be very  
 particular in confessing all the sins which they have com-  
 mitted by their bodies, their skin, their flesh, their

(31) Spel. Concil. t. I. p. 478.

(32) Ibid. t. I. p. 482.

bones, their sinews, their reins, their gristles, their Cent. X.  
 tongues, their lips, their palates, their teeth, their hair,   
 their marrow, by every thing soft or hard, wet or dry.  
 Confessors are then directed what kind of penances to  
 prescribe in a great variety of cases. The most satisfac-  
 tory penances for laymen are said to be these:—To de-  
 sist from carrying arms—to go upon long pilgrimages—  
 never to stay two nights in the same place—never to  
 cut their hair, or pare their nails, or go into a warm  
 bath, or a soft bed—not to eat flesh, or drink strong  
 liquors—and if they were rich, to build and endow  
 churches. Long fastings of several years are prescribed  
 as the proper penances for many offences; but these  
 fastings were not so formidable as they appear at first  
 sight, especially to the rich, as a year's fasting might  
 be redeemed for thirty shillings, equal in quantity of sil-  
 ver to four pounds ten shillings of our money, and in  
 value to more than thirty pounds. A rich man, who  
 had many friends and dependents, might dispatch a se-  
 ven-years fast in three days, by procuring eight hundred  
 and forty men to fast for him three days on bread and  
 water and vegetables (33). From this it appears, how  
 much the discipline of the church was relaxed since the  
 council of Cloveshoos, A. D. 747; in which this curi-  
 ous method of fasting by proxy was condemned.

The three commissioners for expelling the secular ca-  
 nons out of the cathedrals and larger monasteries, ex-  
 ecuted that commission with great vigour, and no little  
 success, during the reign of Edgar; but on the death of  
 that prince, A. D. 975, they received a check. The  
 sufferings of the persecuted canons had excited much  
 compassion; and many of the nobility who had been  
 overawed by the power and zeal of Edgar, now  
 espoused their cause, and promoted their restoration.  
 Elferc duke of Mercia drove the monks by force out of  
 all the monasteries in that extensive province, and  
 brought back the canons, with their wives and children;  
 while Elfwin duke of East-Anglia, and Brithnot duke  
 of Essex, raised their troops to protect the monks in  
 these countries (34). To allay these commotions, seve-  
 ral councils were held; in which Dunstan was so hard  
 pushed by the secular canons and their friends, that he

Disputes  
 between  
 the monks  
 and marri-  
 ed canons.

(33) Spel. Concil. t. i. p. 443—478.

(34) Hoveden. Annal. A. D. 976.



Cent. X. was obliged to practise some of his holy stratagems. In a synod held in the old monastery at Winchester, A. D. 977, when this great cause was about to be determined against the monks, and all the canons lately made in their favour reversed, the assembly was suddenly alarmed with a loud voice, which seemed to proceed from a crucifix built into the partition-wall, crying,—“Don’t do that,—don’t do that.—You judged right formerly; “don’t change your judgment.” On which the assembly broke up in confusion, and nothing was determined (35). Though the enemies of the monks had been a little startled at this pretended prodigy, they were not convinced; which occasioned the meeting of another council at Calne in Wiltshire, A. D. 978; at which the canons and their friends were hurt, as well as frightened. For the room in which the council met being very much crowded, that part of the floor on which the unhappy canons and their advocates stood (the chief of whom was one Beornelm, a Scotch bishop) suddenly fell down; which put an end to the debate for that time, some being killed, and many wounded (36). If these events really happened, we cannot avoid entertaining very unfavourable suspicions of the celebrated St. Dunstan, and pitying the weakness of the English nobility in those benighted times.

Deaths of  
Dunstan,  
Ethel-  
wald, and  
Oswald.

In the reign of Ethelred the Unready, who succeeded his brother Edward the Martyr A. D. 979, the English were engaged in so many wars with the Danes, and involved in so many calamities, that they had little leisure to attend to ecclesiastical affairs; which renders the church-history in the end of the tenth and beginning of the eleventh century as barren as that of the state is melancholy. The three famous prelates, Dunstan, Ethelwald, and Oswald, so far outshone their brethren in their zeal for the monastic institutions, that they quite eclipsed all the other bishops their contemporaries, who are hardly ever mentioned by the monkish writers. Ethelwald bishop of Winchester, a great builder of monasteries, and most zealous patron of the monks, was the first of this famous triumvirate who quitted the stage, dying A. D. 984 (37). By his death, the hopes of the secular ca-

(35) Spel. Concil. t. 1. p. 490.

(36) Id. p. 494. *Anglia Sacra*. t. 2. p. 112.

(37) Godwin de Præful. Angl. p. 266.



nons, of whom he had been a most cruel persecutor, Cent. X. were a little revived, and they made great efforts to get one of their own number elected in his room; but were at length baffled by the superior art and influence of the archbishop, who procured the advancement of Elphigus abbot of Bath to the see of Winchester; by pretending, that the apostle St. Andrew had appeared to him, and assured him, that Elphigus was the fittest person in the world for that charge (38). St. Dunstan did not long survive his friend and fellow-labourer Ethelwald, but died A. D. 988, in the sixty-fourth year of his age, having held the bishopric of London, together with the archbishopric of Canterbury, about twenty-seven years (39). As this prelate was the great restorer and promoter of the monastic institutions, the grateful monks, who were almost the only historians of those dark ages, have loaded him with the most extravagant praises, and represented him as the greatest wonder-worker, and highest favourite of heaven, that ever lived. To say nothing of his many conflicts with the devil, in which he often belaboured that enemy of mankind most severely, the following short story, which is told with great exultation by his biographer Osbern, will give the English reader some idea of the astonishing impiety and impudence of those monks, and of the no less astonishing blindness and credulity of those unhappy times. “The most admirable, the most inestimable father Dunstan (says that author), whose perfections exceeded all human imagination, was admitted to behold the mother of God and his own mother in eternal glory: for before his death, he was carried up into heaven, to be present at the nuptials of his own mother with the eternal King, which were celebrated by the angels with the most sweet and joyous songs. When the angels reproached him for his silence on this great occasion, so honourable to his mother, he excused himself on account of his being unacquainted with those sweet and heavenly strains; but being a little instructed by the angels, he broke out into this melodious song, “O King and Ruler of nations, &c.” It is unnecessary to make any comment on this most shocking story. St. Dunstan was succeeded in the see of Canterbury by Ethel-

(38) *Anglia Sacra*, t. 2. p. 221.(39) *Godwin de Præsul. Angl.* p. 75.

Cent. X. gar bishop of Seolfey, who lived only one year and three months; and then by Siricius bishop of Wilton (40), who governed that church about four years (41). Both these prelates had been monks of Glastonbury, and disciples of St. Dunstan; but the shortness of their pontificates, and the confusion of the times, did not permit them to perform any thing memorable. St. Oswald, the great friend and associate of St. Dunstan in the expulsion of the secular canons, and introduction of the monks, died A. D. 993, after he had held the archbishopric of York, together with the bishopric of Worcester, about twenty-two years (42). By these two famous saints, holding each of them two bishoprics together for so many years, we have some reason to suspect they were not quite so heavenly-minded as their admirers represent them.

Fatal effects of the increase of monasteries. The violent and too successful zeal of Dunstan and his associates, in promoting the building and endowing so great a number of houses for the entertainment of useless monks and nuns, was very fatal to their country: for by this means, a spirit of irrational, unmanly superstition was diffused amongst the people, which debased their minds, and diverted them from nobler pursuits: and a very great proportion of the lands of England was put into hands who contributed nothing to its defence; which made it an easy prey, first to the insulting Danes, and afterwards to the victorious Normans.

Ecclesiastical history of Wales. The people of Wales, who were governed by their own princes, were still instructed by their own clergy, and seem to have had but little connection with the churches of Rome or England in the tenth century. It appears, however, from the laws of Hoel Dha, who flourished about the middle of this century, that the Welsh were not much wiser, or much less superstitious, than their neighbours in this period; for by these laws, which are said to have been made in a great council of the nobility and clergy, at which no fewer than one hundred and forty prelates, i. e. bishops, abbots, and rectors, were present, it is evident that the churches and clergy of Wales enjoyed the same distinctions and immunities with those of England (43). The truth is, that there

(40) *Anglia Sacra*, t. 2. p. 114.

(41) *Godwin de Præsul Angl.* p. 75. (42) *Id.* t. 2. p. 18.

(43) *Leges Hoeli Dha*, a Wottono editæ, *passim*.


was a very great conformity between the laws of Eng- C nt. X.  
land and Wales at this time, both in civil and ecclesiasti-  
cal matters; which must have been occasioned by the  
vicinity of these countries, the unavoidable intercourse of  
their inhabitants, and the ascendant which the kings of  
England had acquired over the princes of Wales, who  
were their vassals and tributaries (44).

The history of the church of Scotland is as little Ecclesiastical history of Scotland.  
known in this period as that of Wales. Though the  
bishops of St. Andrew's were not yet raised to the rank  
of archbishops and metropolitans, they seem to have had  
some kind of pre-eminence over the other bishops of  
Scotland, occasioned probably by their greater wealth,  
and their greater influence with the princes of those  
times. Kellach the Second, who was bishop of St.  
Andrew's from A. D. 904 to A. D. 939, is said to  
have been the first bishop who went from Scotland to  
Rome for consecration, or for obtaining the approbati-  
on of the pope (45). We have good reason to pre-  
sume, that there were several councils held in Scotland  
in the course of this century for the regulation of eccle-  
siastical affairs; but the records of all these councils have  
long ago perished through the injuries of time, the cruel  
policy of Edward I. of England, and the sudden des-  
truction of the abbeys of Scotland, with their archives  
and libraries, at the Reformation. There is a slight  
notice of one of these councils preserved in a very short  
chronicle, which hath escaped all these disasters. "In  
" the following year, A. D. 906, king Constantine,  
" the son of Ethy, with Kellach his bishop, and the  
" Scots, decreed, that the rules of faith and of the gos-  
" pels, with the laws and discipline of the church,  
" should be observed, in an assembly held on the Hill  
" of Faith, near the royal city of Scone. From that  
" day, that hill hath borne the name of *Knockereidigh*,  
" or, *the Hill of Faith* (46)." The dispute about the  
celibacy of the regular canons of Kuldees, is said to  
have been agitated in Scotland as well as in England in  
this century; and there is a circumstance mentioned by  
several monkish historians which renders this very pro-

(44) Leges Hoeli Dda, a Wottono editæ, passim.

(45) Spottiswood's Church History, p. 26.

(46) Innes's Essays, v. 2. p. 786.

Cent. X.  bable. When this great cause was to be debated before a council at Calne in Wiltshire, A. D. 978, the regular canons placed at their head as their chief orator one Beornelm, a Scotch bishop; a man, say these authors, of invincible loquacity, who greatly puzzled poor old St. Dunstan (47). It is not improbable, that this loquacious gentleman had gained a victory on this subject in his own country, which made the English canons engage him to plead their cause.

Cent. XI. *Ælfric's*  
homilies. *Ælfric*, formerly bishop of Wilton, was archbishop of Canterbury from A. D. 995 to A. D. 1005; and was one of the most learned men and most voluminous writers of the age in which he lived. This prelate, conscious of the incapacity of many of the clergy to instruct the people in the principles and precepts of religion, translated no fewer than eighty sermons or homilies from the Latin into the Saxon language for their use (48). These sermons were suited to different seasons and occasions, and were designed to be read by the inferior clergy to the people at these seasons for their instruction. The sermon for Easter Sunday, on the sacrament of the Lord's supper, hath been often printed; and shews very plainly, that the church of England had not yet embraced the doctrine of transubstantiation (49). This is sufficiently evident from the following passage in that discourse: "The body that Christ suffered in was born  
" of the flesh of Mary, with blood and with bone, with  
" skin and with sinews, in human limbs, with a reason-  
" able living soul: but his spiritual body, which we  
" call the *houfel*, is gathered of many corns, without  
" blood and bone, without limb, without soul; and  
" therefore nothing is to be understood therein bodily,  
" but spiritually. Whatever is in the *houfel* which  
" giveth life, that is spiritual virtue, and invisible ener-  
" gy. Christ's body that suffered death, and rose from  
" death, shall never die again, but is eternal and unpassible; but *houfel* is temporal, not eternal, corruptible, and dealed into sundry parts, chewed between  
" the teeth, and sent into the belly. This mystery is a  
" pledge and a figure; Christ's body is truth itself.  
" This pledge we do keep mystically until we come to

(47) *Anglia Sacra*, t. 2. p. 112.

(48) *Ælfrici præfatio secunda ad grammaticam suam*, p. 2.


(49) *Hickes dissertatio epistolæ*, p. 98.



“ the truth itself ; and then is this pledge ended (50).” Cent. XI. It is hardly possible to express the present sentiments of the church of England, and of other Protestant churches, on this subject, in plainer words than these ; and it would certainly be no easy task for the most artful sophister to accommodate them to the doctrine of transubstantiation.

This excellent prelate, for so he certainly was for the age in which he lived, composed also a kind of episcopal charge, which seems to have been designed as a form for bishops in instructing their clergy. The several injunctions in this charge are delivered in an authoritative tone, and in the form of commands ; for which reason they have been commonly called *Ælfric's canons*, though there is no appearance of their having been enacted by any ecclesiastical synod. These injunctions or canons are thirty-seven in number, and contain many curious particulars concerning the discipline and ceremonies of the church of England in those times. As Ælfric had been educated under Ethelwald bishop of Winchester, he was, like his master, a great promoter of the celibacy of the clergy ; and therefore, in the first eight of these canons, he argues strenuously, though not very logically, against the marriage of priests. It appears however, from those very canons, that the clergy of England were generally married at this time, and that they stoutly defended the lawfulness of their marriages. “ These canons against the marriage of priests (says Ælfric) seem strange to you to hear ; for ye have so brought your wretched doings into fashion, as if there was no danger in priests living like married men. The priests now reply, That St. Peter was a married man, and that they cannot live without the company of a woman.” By the ninth of these canons, the clergy are forbidden to be present at a marriage, or to give their benediction, when either of the parties had been married before, though such marriages are not declared to be absolutely unlawful, but only to be discouraged. The next seven canons describe the names and offices of the seven orders of the clergy, which are these :—1. the ostiary, who is to open and shut the church-doors, and ring the bells :—2. the lector, who is to read God's word in the church ;—3. the

Ælfric's  
canons.

Cent. XI.  exorcist, whose office is to drive out evil spirits by invocations and adjurations;—4. the acolyth, who holds the tapers at the reading of the gospels, and celebrating mass;—5. the sub-deacon, who is to bring forth the holy vessels, and attend the deacon at the altar;—6. the deacon, who ministers to the mass-priest, places the oblation on the altar, reads the gospel, baptizeth children, and gives the housel to the people;—7. the mass-priest or presbyter, who preaches, baptizes, and consecrates the housel. This canon declares, that the bishop is of the same order with the presbyter, but more honourable. By the eighteenth, the distinction between the secular clergy and the monks or regulars is established. The next canon commands the clergy to sing the seven tide-songs at their appointed hours, viz. the ught-song, or matins, early in the morning,—the prime-song at seven o'clock,—the undern-song at nine o'clock,—the mid-day song at twelve o'clock,—the none-song at three o'clock afternoon,—and the night-song at nine o'clock at night. By the twenty-first canon, priests are commanded to provide themselves with all the necessary books for performance of divine service, viz. the psalter, the epistle-book, the gospel-book, the mass-book, the song-book, the hand-book, the kalendar, the passionnal, the penitential, and the reading-book. By the twenty-third, priests are commanded to explain the gospel for the day, every Sunday, in English, to the people, and to teach them the creed and *Pater noster* in English as often as they can. By the twenty-seventh, priests are forbidden to take money for baptizing children, or performing any other part of their duty. The thirty-second commands priests always to have a sufficient quantity of oil by them which had been consecrated by the bishop, for baptizing children and anointing the sick; but that no sick person should be anointed unless he desired it. The thirty-seventh and last of these canons is in the form of an epistle, which was given to each priest on Maundy Thursday, when he came or sent to the bishop for his annual flock of consecrated chrism and oil; and contains several directions about the celebration of mass, and other offices. Among many other ceremonies to be performed on Good-Friday, the people are directed to adore and kiss the cross. As the freaks of superstition are endless, some priests about this time had conceived

a notion,

a notion, that the sacramental bread consecrated on Easter-day was more efficacious than that which was hallowed at any other time; and therefore they used to consecrate a great quantity on that day, and keep it through the whole year for the use of the sick. This practice is condemned, because when the consecrated bread was kept so long, it was apt to become stale, to be lost, or eaten by mice. Priests are directed to mix water with the sacramental wine; "because the wine betokeneth our redemption through Christ's blood, and the water betokeneth the people for whom he suffered." A great number of fast-days are commanded to be observed, particularly every Friday, except from Easter to Pentecost, and from Midwinter to Twelfth-night. Sunday was to be kept from Saturday at noon to Monday morning (51). These are the most remarkable particulars in this famous charge; on which we shall leave our readers to make their own reflections.

Archbishop Ælfric expelled the regular canons who would not abandon their wives from his cathedral church of Canterbury, and brought in Benedictine monks in their room. He had also the influence to procure a charter from king Ethelred, confirming that transaction, and all the privileges and possessions of his favourite monks; praying most devoutly, that all persons who should give them any disturbance might be torn by the teeth of all the dogs in hell (52). This seems to have been the last transaction of this prelate's life; who died A. D. 1005, and was succeeded by Elphegus bishop of Winchester.

The English at this time were involved in very great calamities, and threatened with total ruin, by a grievous famine, and the sword of the victorious Danes, from whom they sometimes purchased a short precarious truce with great sums of money. In one of these intervals, A. D. 1009, a great council of all the chief men of the clergy and laity was held at Ensham in Oxfordshire, to deliberate on the most effectual means of preserving themselves and their country from that destruction with which they were threatened. Elphegus archbishop of Canterbury, and Wulfstan archbishop of York, seem to have convinced this wise assembly, that to oblige the

Death of  
Ælfric.

Council of  
Ensham.

(51) Spel. Concil. t. 1. p. 572—582. Johnson's Canons, A. D. 957.

(52) Spel. Concil. t. 1. p. 504.

**Cent. XI.** clergy to put away their wives, and the laity to pay all their dues honestly and punctually to the church, would be the best means of averting the displeasure, and conciliating the favour of heaven; and therefore many strict laws were made for these purposes (53). But either these laws were not well observed, or had not the desired effect: for the miseries of the English still continued to increase; and about four years after this, the Danes having taken Canterbury, reduced it to ashes, butchered nine-tenths of the inhabitants, and murdered the archbishop, because he would not, or could not, pay the prodigious ransom which they demanded (54).

**Council of Habham.** Livingus bishop of Wells succeeded Elphegus A. D. 1013, and was deeply involved in the calamities of those unhappy times (55). Soon after the return of king Ethelred from Normandy (whither he had fled with his family to escape the fury of the victorious Danes), a great council was held A. D. 1014, at a place called *Habham*; in which it was resolved to practise some extraordinary devotions, to prevail upon the saints and angels to fight against the Danes. St. Michael the Archangel had lately gained great reputation by a victory which the Christians in Apulia had obtained by his means, as they imagined, over the Pagans; and the English determined to persuade this celestial warrior, if possible, to do them the like favour. With this view, it was decreed at this council, that every person who was of age should fast three days on bread, water, and raw herbs, before the feast of St. Michael, should confess and go to church barefoot; and that every priest, with his whole congregation, should go these three days in solemn procession barefoot. The monks and nuns in all their convents were commanded to celebrate the mass *contra Paganos* (against the Pagans) every canonical hour, lying prostrate on the ground, and in that posture to sing the psalm, —“Lord, how are they increased that trouble me!” &c (56). The English at that time seem to have reposed their chief hopes of preservation in these and such observations; so entirely were their minds blinded and infa-

(53) *Spel. Concil.* t. 1. p. 513, &c.

(54) *Anglia Sacra*, t. 2. p. 141.

(55) *Collect. de Preful. Ang.* p. 77.

(56) *Johnsen's Canon*, A. D. 1014. *Spel. Concil.* t. 1. p. 530.



tuated by superstition. Their affairs, however, became daily more and more desperate; and about three years after this council, they were entirely subdued by the Danes. Cent. XI.

Though the generality of the Danes at this time were either Pagans, or only a kind of half Christians, their king Canute, who became also king of England A. D. 1017, was a zealous Christian, according to the mode of the age in which he lived. Of this he gave sufficient evidence,—by repairing the monasteries which had been destroyed by the Danes in the late wars,—by granting many immunities to the convents and clergy,—by building and endowing churches (57),—by visiting Rome in person A. D. 1031, and chiefly—by the many ecclesiastical laws that were made in his reign (58). The first system of Canute's ecclesiastical laws contains twenty-six canons; of which the first four enlarge and secure the protection of the church, or its rights of sanctuary. In the third of these canons, churches are ranged into four classes, and the mulct for violating their protection proportioned to their dignity, viz. for violating the protection of a cathedral, five pounds; of a middling church, one hundred and twenty shillings; of a lesser church that hath a burying-place, sixty shillings; of a country church without a burying-place, thirty shillings. In the fifth canon, rules are laid down for the trial of priests accused of various crimes, which are very favourable to the clergy. By the sixth, celibacy is recommended to all the clergy, and particularly enjoined to those in priests orders; and for their encouragement it is declared, that an unmarried priest shall be esteemed equal in dignity to a thane. The seventh prohibits marriage within the sixth degree of kindred. In the six subsequent canons, all the dues payable to the clergy, as tithes of corn and cattle, Rome-scot, church-scot, plough-alms, light-scot, and soul-scot, are enumerated, and the payment of them secured by various penalties. The remaining canons contain nothing new or curious (59). There are several laws respecting religion and the church intermixed with the civil laws of this prince; of which the following one is the most remarkable:

Ecclesiastical laws  
of king  
Canute.

(57) W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 11.

(58) Id. ibid. p. 533—570.

(59) Johnson's Canons, A. D. 1017. Spel. Concil. t. 1. p. 538.

Cent. XI. “ We strictly prohibit all Heathenism; i. e. the worship of idols or Heathen gods, the sun, moon, fire, rivers, fountains, rocks, or trees of any kind; the practice of witchcraft, or committing murder by magic, or firebrands, or any other infernal tricks.”

History of the church in the reigns of Harold, Hardicanute, and Edward the Confessor.

The two succeeding reigns of Harold Harefoot and Hardicanute, from A. D. 1035 to A. D. 1041, were so short and unsettled, that they afford no materials of importance for the history of the church. Though Edward the Confessor was a prince of great piety, according to the mode of the times in which he lived, his court was so much disturbed, during the greatest part of his reign, by the cabals of the English and Norman factions, that he did not pay so much attention to ecclesiastical affairs as might have been expected. There are indeed two systems of laws extant, which are commonly called *the laws of Edward the Confessor*, in which there are several canons in favour of the church and clergy; but they contain in their own bosom the most unquestionable evidence of their having been composed, or at least very much changed, after the conquest (60). This prince, however, was a great benefactor to the church, and employed the last years of his life in building the famous monastery of St. Peter's, Westminster, on which he bestowed great riches, and many singular privileges and immunities (61).

Character of the eleventh century.

Ignorance and superstition arrived at a great height in the church of England in the former part of the eleventh century. Of this the frequency of pilgrimages to Rome,—the prodigious sums expended in the purchase of relics,—the immense wealth and pernicious immunities of the clergy, to mention no others, are sufficient evidences. In this period, the roads between England and Rome were so crowded with pilgrims, that the very tolls which they paid were objects of importance to the princes through whose territories they passed; and very few Englishmen imagined they could get to heaven without paying this compliment to St. Peter, who kept the Keys of the celestial regions (62). The pope and Roman clergy carried on a very lucrative traffic in relics, of

(60) Johnson's Canons, A. D. 1064, 1065. Spel. Concil. t. 1. p. 69.  
 (61) English Monasticon, vol. 1. p. 58.  
 (62) W. Malm. l. 2. c. 11.

which

which they never wanted inexhaustible stores. <sup>Kings, Cent. XI.</sup> princes, and wealthy prelates, purchased pieces of the cross, or whole legs and arms of apostles; while others were obliged to be contented with the toes and fingers of inferior saints. Agelnoth archbishop of Canterbury, when he was at Rome, A. D. 1021, purchased from the pope an arm of St. Augustin bishop of Hippo, for one hundred talents, or six thousand pound weight of silver, and one talent, or sixty pound weight of gold (63). A prodigious sum! which may enable us to form some idea of the unconscionable knavery of the sellers, and the astonishing folly and superstition of the purchasers, of those commodities. The building, endowing, and adorning of monasteries, had been carried on with such mad profusion for about one hundred and fifty years, that a great part of the wealth of England had been expended on these structures, or lay buried in their ornaments and utensils. "The masses of gold and silver (says "William of Malmesbury), which queen Emma, with a "holy prodigality, bestowed upon the monasteries of "Winchester, astonished the minds of strangers, while "the splendour of the precious stones dazzled their "eyes (64)." In this period the numbers, both of the secular and regular clergy, increased very much, and their possessions still more. By the frequent and extravagant grants of land bestowed on cathedrals, monasteries, and other churches, from the beginning of the tenth to the middle of the eleventh century, we have good reason to believe, that at the death of Edward the Confessor more than one-third of all the lands of England were in the possession of the clergy, exempted from all taxes, and for the most part even from military services (65). When we reflect on these circumstances, we cannot be very much surprised, that the people of England, in this period, were so cruelly insulted by the Danes, and at the end of it so easily conquered by the Normans.

(63) W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 11.

(64) Id. *ibid.*

(65) Spelman Gloss. p. 396.

T H E  
H I S T O R Y  
O F  
G R E A T B R I T A I N.

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B O O K II.

C H A P. III.

*The history of the constitution, government, and laws of Great Britain, from the arrival of the Saxons, A. D. 449, to the landing of William duke of Normandy, A. D. 1066.*

Curiosity  
and im-  
portance  
of the sub-  
ject of this  
chapter.

THE history of that political constitution and form of government, which was established in the best and greatest part of this island, and of the laws which were enacted by the Anglo-Saxons in this period, is equally curious, important, and interesting. It is curious, as it sets before us a great variety of uncommon and amusing objects, and discovers the origin of many of our most ancient customs and institutions. It is important and interesting to the English nation, as that form of government, and those laws, were the work of their remote ancestors; the most valuable legacy which they left to their posterity, and the foundation of that most noble and beautiful superstructure, their present free and happy constitution.

Difficulty  
of writing  
the history  
of law and  
govern-  
ment.

It is much to be lamented, that it is so difficult, or rather that it is impossible, to write the history of the origin and progress of the English constitution, laws, and government, in so clear and full a manner, as to leave



leave nothing dark or wanting; and supported in every part with such strength of evidence, as to leave nothing doubtful. That this is really impossible, will be most readily acknowledged by those who are best acquainted with the subject. The writers who flourished in this period were very few, and these few were cloistered monks; who never entertained a thought of giving a particular account of the laws and government of their country. Many of the Anglo-Saxon laws themselves have been entirely lost, and others have suffered so much by the injuries of time, and the inattention of transcribers, that their meaning can hardly be discovered. Some particulars relating to this subject are sunk so deep in the darkness of antiquity, and others are so involved in clouds of learned dust that have been raised by angry disputants, that it seems to require more than human sagacity to find out the truth, and guard against mistakes. In these circumstances, all that can be done is,—to cherish a cordial love of truth,—to search after it with care and diligence,—and to lay the result of these researches before the public with plainness and sincerity.

To prevent that confusion which is commonly occasioned by blending various subjects together, and to preserve an uniformity between the plan of this chapter and of that on government in the preceding period, it is proper to divide it into three distinct sections. In the first section shall be given—A brief account—of the several German nations which settled in Britain in this period;—of the places of their original seats on the continent;—of the situation and limits of their settlements in this island;—of the political divisions of their territories that were made by them, and by the other British nations. The second section shall contain a delineation,—of the different ranks of people,—of magistrates,—and of courts of law and justice, in Britain, in this period. The third and last section shall comprehend the history of the several kinds of laws that were enacted, and in force, in this period.

Plan of  
this chapter.

## SECTION I.

*A brief account—of the several German nations which settled in Britain, in this period;—of the places of their original seats on the continent;—of the situation and limits of their settlements in this island;—of the political divisions of their territories that were made by them,—and by the other British nations.*

ANCIENT Germany comprehended all that extensive tract of country which is bounded by the Rhine on the south,—by the German ocean on the west,—by the northern sea on the north,—and by the Vistula, &c. on the east (1). This country (which, besides modern Germany, comprehended all the dominions of Denmark and Sweden, and several other districts) was anciently inhabited by a prodigious number of distinct tribes and nations. But though these Germanic nations differed very much from one another,—in their situation,—their strength,—their wealth,—and some other circumstances; yet they appear to have sprung from the same origin,—to have spoken the same language, though in different dialects,—and to have borne a very great resemblance to each other in their manners, customs, and forms of government (2).

Original  
seats of the  
German  
nations  
which  
came into  
Britain.

This was particularly true of those nations which came from Germany, and settled in Britain, in this period, and from whom the great body of the English nation is descended. Their original seats on the continent were contiguous, situated in that peninsula which is commonly called *the Cimbric Chersonese*, bounded by the river Elbe on the south, by the German ocean on the west, and by the Baltic sea on the north and east. When the unhappy Britons formed the fatal resolution of calling in foreign auxiliaries, to preserve them from that destruction with which they were threatened by the Scots and Picts, they could find none nearer than the inhabitants of that country, who were likely to grant them

(1) Cluver. *German. Antiq.* l. i. c. 2. p. 56.

(2) Tacit. *de Morib. German.* passim. *Northern Antiquities*, Preface, p. 24.

the protection which they wanted: for their nearest neighbours, and natural allies, the Gauls, who spoke the same language, and professed the same religion with themselves, were in no condition to give them any assistance, having been invaded, and almost conquered, by the Franks, another German nation (3).

The country above described, to which the Britons directed their eyes for relief in their distress, was at that time inhabited by three nations, which were called *Saxons, Angles, and Jutes*; who sent armies into Britain, and there obtained settlements (4). From these three nations the English in general derive their origin; though several other nations, particularly Danes and Normans, have since mingled with them in very great numbers (5).

The Saxons had long been the most powerful of these three nations, and had held the other two in some degree of subjection. This is the reason that those famous rovers who infested the narrow seas, plundered the coasts of Gaul and Britain, and gave the Romans so much trouble, in the fourth and fifth centuries, were all called Saxons, though they consisted of several nations. The chief seat of the people properly called Saxons, was in *Holfatia*, or Old Saxony, now *Holstein*; though, after the departure of the Franks into Gaul, they extended themselves along the sea-coasts to the banks of the Rhine (6). The Britons, having often experienced the valour of these Saxons to their cost, were desirous of employing it in their defence; and knowing them to be a maritime people, who delighted in such expeditions, they very naturally applied to them for assistance. They were but too successful in their application; several bands of Saxon adventurers came over and fixed themselves in Britain, where their posterity still flourish, though under another name, and bear, if we may believe several travellers, a very remarkable resemblance in their persons to the present inhabitants of *Holstein*, from whence their ancestors came (7).

The Angles are said to have been a tribe of the Suevi, who in Cæsar's time were the greatest and bravest of all the German nations (8). This tribe, after various ad-

(3) *Gregor. Turonens. l. 1. 2.*

(4) *Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. 1. c. 15. Chronicon Ethelwerdi. l. 1.*

(5) *Sheringham de Origine Gentis Anglorum, c. 2. p. 25, &c.*

(6) *Id. ibid.*

(7) *Howel's Letters, vol. 1. § 6. let. 4.*

(8) *Cæsar Bel. Gal. l. 4.*

ventures and migrations, settled in that part of the Cimbric Chersonesus, which now forms the duchy of Sleswic, where some vestiges of their name still remain in the district of Anglen, between Sleswic and Flensburgh (9). It was in this situation the British ambassadors found them; and from this country they embarked in the British expeditions, with greater spirit, and in greater numbers, than any of the other German nations; which procured them the honour of giving their name to England and its inhabitants, who make at present one of the richest, most powerful, and flourishing nations in the world (10).

**The Iutes.** The Iutes, who were a tribe of the Getæ, the conquerors of so many countries, inhabited the extremity of the Cimbric Chersonesus, which from them is still called *Jutland*, and is bounded by the German ocean on the west, the Baltic on the east, and the country of the Angles on the south (11). Besides these three nations, there were many adventurers belonging to the neighbouring tribes, particularly to the Frizians, who embarked with them in their Britannic expeditions, and settled in this island.

**Their seats in Britain.** The history of the several embarkations of these three nations from their native seats for this island, and of the seven kingdoms which they established in it, hath been already given (12). It only remains, in this place, to give a very brief description of the most common boundaries of these several kingdoms, with an account of the particular nation by which each of them was erected, that all the people of England may have a distinct view of their remote ancestors. In doing this, we shall begin at the south-west corner of Britain, and proceed regularly towards the north-east.

**Kingdom of Wessex.** The south-west parts of Britain were subdued by several successive bands of Saxons, who there erected a kingdom about the beginning of the sixth century; which, from their name, and that of its situation, was called the kingdom of *Wessex*, or of the *West-Saxons*. This kingdom was very small for a considerable time after it was founded; but being happy in a long succession of great princes of the same royal family, it gradually in-

(9) Cluver German. Antiq. l. 3. c. 27. p. 605.

(10) Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. 1. c. 15.

(11) Sheringham, c. 2. p. 32.

(12) See chap. 1.

creased,



creased, and at length swallowed up all the other kingdoms. In the times of the heptarchy, it comprehended those countries which now constitute the counties of Hants, Berks, Wilts, Somerset, Dorset, Devon, and part of Cornwall (13). The isle of Wight, which lies off the coast of Hampshire, was commonly under the government of the kings of Wessex, though it was peopled by a colony of Iutes, who also possessed some districts on the continent opposite to that island (14). The capital of this kingdom was Winchester, the Venta Belgarum of the Romans, and the Cair Guent of the Britons.

2. Next to the kingdom of Wessex lay the little kingdom of Suffex, or of the South-Saxons, comprehending only the two counties of Surrey and Suffex. It was, as its name implies, founded and inhabited by Saxons. This kingdom, though one of the most ancient, was one of the smallest, weakest, and of the shortest duration of any of the heptarchy. When it was converted to Christianity, A. D. 678, it contained no more than about seven thousand families (15). This was partly owing to its small extent; but chiefly to a great part of it being covered with the wood Andereda (16). The capital of this little kingdom was Chichester, the Regnum of the Romans, and the Cair Cei of the Britons. Kingdom of Suffex.

3. Next to Suffex, eastward, lay the kingdom of Kent, which comprehended only the county of that name. This was the most ancient of all the Saxon kingdoms in Britain, having been founded about A. D. 455, and was also the first that embraced the Christian religion. This kingdom, if we may depend on the authority of Bede and Ethelwerd, was erected and inhabited by a colony of Iutes, who seem not to have come directly from Jutland into Britain, but to have been settled for some time near the mouth of the Rhine, where it is probable the British ambassadors found them (17); for it is quite improbable, that those ambassadors would make their first application at the greatest distance; and there is some positive evidence, that Hengist, the founder of this kingdom, built the castle of Leyden a little before Kingdom of Kent.

(13) Speed Chron. p. 292. (14) Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. i. c. 15.

(15) Id. l. 4. c. 13.

(16) Camd. Britan. v. 1. p. 195.

(17) Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. i. c. 15. Ethelwerd, l. 1.

he embarked on his British expedition (18). Though this kingdom was of small extent, it was very populous; and several of its princes bore a considerable sway in the heptarchy. The city of Canterbury, the Durovernum of the Romans, and the Cair Ceint of the Britons, was the capital of the kingdom of Kent, and one of the most considerable cities in England in the Saxon times.

Kingdom  
of Essex.

4. To the north-east of Kent, the kingdom of Essex, or of the East and Middle Saxons, was situated, comprehending only the counties of Essex and Middlesex, and a part of Hertfordshire. This kingdom, as its name imports, was founded and possessed by a colony of Saxons; but though it was rich and populous, and had the famous city of London for its capital, it made no distinguished figure in the heptarchy, its princes being for the most part in a state of dependence on those of Kent.

Kingdom  
of East-  
Anglia.

5. To the north-east of the kingdom of Essex that of the East-Angles was situated, comprehending the counties of Cambridge, Suffolk, Norfolk, and the isle of Ely. This kingdom was founded and inhabited by Angles, who landed in that part of Britain, because it was not pre-occupied by their neighbours the Saxons or Jutes, and lay nearest to their own country (19). It was bounded on the east and north by the ocean, on the south by Essex, and on the west by St. Edmund's ditch, dividing it from Mercia. The capital of East-Anglia was Dunwich, called by Bede *Domnœc*, a place of considerable note in the British, Roman, and Saxon times, but now swallowed up by the sea (20).

Kingdom  
of Mercia.

6. In the very centre of England lay the powerful and extensive kingdom of Mercia, comprehending (besides a part of Hertfordshire) no fewer than sixteen of our present counties, viz. Huntingdon, Rutland, Lincoln, Northampton, Leicester, Derby, Nottingham, Oxford, Chester, Salop, Gloucester, Worcester, Stafford, Warwick, Buckingham, Bedford. This kingdom was erected and possessed also by the Angles, and was therefore sometimes called the kingdom of the Mediterranean English (21). It derived its more common name of

(18) *Camd. Britan. pref. col. 157.*

(19) *Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. i. c. 15.*

(20) *Id. l. 2. c. 15. Camd. Britan. v. 1. p. 448.*

(21) *Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. 3. c. 21.*

Mercia from its situation, bordering upon the marches of all the other kingdoms of the heptarchy, as well as of Wales. This situation had both its advantages and disadvantages; for as it gave the kings of Mercia an opportunity of invading all their neighbours, so it exposed them to the danger of being assaulted on all sides. Leicester, the *Ratæ* of the Romans, was the capital of Mercia.

7. The seventh kingdom of the heptarchy was that of Northumberland, so called from its situation to the north of the Humber. This kingdom was also very extensive, comprehending all that part of England which lies to the north of the Humber and Mersey, and all that part of Scotland which lies to the south of the Forth. The Northumbrian territories were sometimes divided into the two kingdoms of Deira and Bernicia; of which the former, whose capital was York, comprehended the country between the Humber and the Tyne; and the latter, whose capital was Bamburgh, the country between the Tyne and the Forth. All these countries were inhabited by Angles, though probably with a great mixture of Iutes; for *Oeta* and *Ebissa*, who settled a large colony in the desolated country between the walls of Severus and Antoninus Pius very early, were nearly related to Hengist the first king of Kent. We may be apt to be surprised, that the Angles, who were not near so numerous or powerful as the Iutes and Saxons, conquered and took possession of more than two-thirds of England (to which they gave their name), besides a considerable part of Scotland. But the reason of this seems to have been, that the Iutes and Saxons only sent a few bands of adventurers into Britain, the body of these nations still continuing at home; while the Angles removed almost entirely from the continent into this island, leaving their native seats desolate; in which condition, Bede assures us they remained in his time (22).

Such, in general, were the situations and limits of the several kingdoms of the heptarchy, and the Germanic nations by which they were originally erected and inhabited. Though some of these kingdoms were very small, and none of them, except those of Mercia and Northumberland, of any great extent, yet we have good

Kingdom  
of North-  
umber-  
land.

Subdivi-  
sions of  
these king-  
doms.

(22) Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. i. c. 15.

reason to believe, that they were subdivided into smaller districts, for the more convenient administration both of the civil and military government. The Anglo-Saxon territories in Germany were subdivided into what the Roman historians call *pagi et vici*; which may not improperly be translated *shires and townships*, or *hundreds*; and we may be almost certain, that they subdivided the territories of each state in a similar manner as soon as they settled in this island (23). Such subdivisions, and their respective governors, are frequently mentioned by our historians long before the end of the heptarchy (24). It is not therefore strictly true, that Alfred the Great was the first who divided England into shires, hundreds, &c. though it is very probable, that great prince made a new and more regular division than that which had subsisted before his time. The reader will find an account of a political division of all that part of England which lies to the south of the Humber, specifying the number of hides, or plough-lands, in each district, in the work quoted below (25). This division was evidently very ancient, and subsisted in the time of the heptarchy.

Political  
divisions of  
Wales.

It is quite impossible to give an exact delineation of the political divisions of the territories of the British or Welsh princes from the establishment to the end of the heptarchy. The number of these princes who flourished at the same time often varied. From Gildas we learn, that there were five British kings or princes who reigned over so many little principalities of the Britons, about the middle of the sixth century, when he wrote his satirical epistle against these princes (26). Soon after, the number of these princes and principalities appears to have been six, viz. Guynedh, Powys, Dehewbarth, Reynnuc, Epylluc, Morgannuc (27). The truth is, that every thing was fluctuating and unsettled among the unhappy Britons in this period; and the number and limits of their little principalities were perpetually changing, by the fortune of war, and the fatal custom of dividing the

(23) Tacit. de Morib. German. lib. 12. Caesar Bel. Gal. l. 6. Cæven. Germ. n. p. 91.

(24) Bed. l. 4. c. 4. l. 5. c. 4. 15. W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 4.

(25) Scriptore Britan. edit. a Gale, l. 1. p. 748.

(26) Epist. Gildæ, sub. init.

(27) Hun ph-Lloyd. Fragment. Britan. p. 51.



territories of a prince at his death among all his sons. By this custom, the territories of the Britons were sometimes subdivided into an incredible number of little states, which were subject to an equal number of petty tyrants, constantly at war with each other, and an easy prey to their common enemies the Saxons. Without attempting to describe the limits of these little temporary states, which were almost daily changing, it is sufficient to observe, that the most common and lasting division of the British territories in this period, was into the three following principalities or kingdoms. 1. Dehewbarth, now South Wales, the country of the brave Silures. This principality was anciently divided into the six districts of, (1.) Cairdigan, now Cardiganhire; (2.) Dyvet, now Pembrokehire; (3.) Cairmarden, now Carmarthenhire; (4.) Morganive, now Glamorganhire; (5.) Guent, now Monmouthshire; (6.) Brecknock, now Brecknockshire. The chief residence or capital of the ancient princes of South Wales, was Cairmarden, and sometimes Dinevor castle. 2. The principality of Matheaul, or Powysland, the country of the Demetæ, was divided into the three districts of Powys-Vadoc, Powys between the Wye and Severn, and Powys Wanwynwyn. The chief residence of the ancient princes of Powysland, was first at Pengwern, now Shrewsbury, and afterwards at Mothraul. 3. The principality of Gwyneth, now North Wales, the country of the Ordovices, was divided into the four districts of Mon, now Anglesey; Avuon, now Caernarvon; Meryonyth, now Merionethshire; and y Berwedhwloed, now Denbighshire and Flintshire. The chief residence of the princes of Gwyneth, or North Wales, was at Aberfrau, in the isle of Anglesey. Each of these districts or provinces in the three principalities of Wales, were subdivided into so many Cantreves, and these again into so many Commots; so as to make fifty-one Cantreves, and one hundred and fifty-eight Commots, in all Wales (28).

That part of Great Britain, which hath for many ages been called *Scotland*, was, in the times of the heptarchy, inhabited by four nations, viz. 1. the Angles, or English, of the kingdom of Bernicia; 2. the Strath-Cluyd Britons; 3. the Scots; 4. the Picts. The limits of the

Political  
divisions of  
Scotland.

(28) See Speed's Description of Wales,

kingdom of Bernicia have been already described. The country of the Strath-Cluyd Britons, commonly called the kingdom or principality of Cumbria, was a scene of greater confusion, and of more frequent revolutions, than even Wales itself in this period. When this principality was in a flourishing state, it extended from the river Ribble in Lancashire along the western coast to the mouth of the Clyde, where its capital, Alcluyd, now Dumbarton, was situated. But in the sixth and seventh centuries, this country was torn in pieces by many petty tyrants, which exposed the south parts of it to be subdued by the English kings of Deira and Bernicia, and the north parts by the Scots and Picts (29). The territories of the Scots, in the beginning of this period, were neither large nor fertile. Their limits are thus described in two of the most ancient chronicles now extant: "Fergus, the son of Eric, reigned over Albany, from Drumalbin to the sea of Ireland and Inchevall (30)." From this description, it seems probable, that the Scots, before they subdued the Picts, possessed only that part of Caledonia which lies along the west and north sea from the frith of Clyde to the Orkneys; and that their territories were divided from those of the Picts on the east by those high mountains which run from Lochlomonnd to the frith of Taine (31). The Picts possessed all the rest of Scotland beyond the frith of Forth, and had frequent disputes with the Northumbrian kings about the country between the Forth and Tweed; which, though almost wholly inhabited by Anglo-Saxons, was sometimes under the government of the Picts; who, before the extinction of their monarchy, had even extended their dominion over all the west parts of Scotland, which lay between the friths of Clyde and Solway (32).

Establishment of the English and Scotch monarchies.

Such were the political divisions of Great Britain from the beginning of the sixth to the middle of the ninth century. About that time a great change took place in the distribution of power in this island, by the establishment of the English monarchy in the south on the ruins of the heptarchy, and of the Scotch monarchy in the north, on the ruins of the Pictish kingdom. Soon

(29) Carte's Hist. v. 1. p. 210—213.

(30) Innes's Essays, Append. No. 1. 4.

(31) See Dr. Macpherson's Dissertations, p. 332, &c.

(32) Id. *ibid.*

after this great revolution, the two kingdoms of England and Scotland arrived at the same limits which they ever after retained (with some small and temporary variations), until they were happily united into one empire, in the beginning of the present century.

Not long after the establishment of the English monarchy, Alfred the Great made a new and more regular division of his whole kingdom, very different from that which had subsisted under the heptarchy in many respects. In order to form his division with greater exactness, that wise and active prince commanded a survey of all his territories to be taken, and recorded in the book of Winchester (33). From this book, which contained a description of the rivers, mountains, woods, cities, towns, and villages, with an account of the number of plough-lands and inhabitants in each district, he divided the whole into a certain number of shires, nearly, though not exactly, the same with our present counties. Each shire was again divided into trithings or leths; of which division there are still some vestiges in the ridings of Yorkshire, the leths of Kent, and the rapes of Sussex (34). Every trithing was subdivided into so many centuries or hundreds, and each hundred into ten decennaries or districts, containing ten families, or near that number; for in such distributions, it was impossible to be quite precise and accurate. All the members of each decennary were mutual pledges for each other's obedience to the laws, and answerable, with some equitable restrictions, for their disobedience (35). Whoever was not a member of some decennary, was considered as a vagabond, who could claim no protection or benefit from the laws of his country. In each of these divisions of shires, trithings, hundreds, and decennaries, that wise king appointed certain magistrates and courts, which shall be hereafter described. It is impossible to conceive any distribution more admirably contrived than this, for preserving peace and good order, and bringing all the members of the society under the immediate eye of the law, as every member of it had nine persons, besides himself, who were answerable for his good behaviour.

Political  
division of  
England  
by Alfred  
the Great.

(33) Ingulf. Hist.

(34) Spelman Vita Ælfridi, p. 74.

(35) Wilkin's Leges Saxonica, p. 20—204.

State of  
population  
in Britain  
in this  
period.

Britain was far from being populous in the period we are now considering. Of this the most ample evidence, as well as the most satisfactory reasons, may be given. The Scots and Picts had almost quite depopulated a great part of provincial Britain before the arrival of the Saxons (36). Those dangerous auxiliaries becoming enemies, extirpated, enslaved, or expelled, all the ancient inhabitants of the best part of Britain, in erecting their seven kingdoms. After these kingdoms were erected, their cruel and incessant wars against each other prevented their becoming populous. When those seven kingdoms were united into one monarchy, new enemies appeared, no less destructive to population than any of the former, and prevented the happy effects of that union. The fatal rage of building monasteries, and crowding them with useless monks and nuns; this rage, I say, which seized the kings and nobility of England, after the establishment of the English monarchy, contributed not a little to impede the increase of people in that period. The very imperfect state of commerce, manufactures, and agriculture, which occasioned frequent and destructive famines, is at once an evidence and a cause of a scanty population in those times. As a further evidence of this, it may be observed, that there were very few cities or towns in Britain in this period, and these few were small and thinly peopled. In Scotland, there was not perhaps so much as one place that merited the name of a city; and in South Britain, where the Romans had built so great a number of towns, we are told by Nennius, there were only twenty-eight remaining in the seventh century (37). There is the clearest evidence from Doomsday-book, that not one of these cities, even at the end of this period (London and Winchester perhaps excepted), contained ten thousand inhabitants; and the greatest part of them contained only a few hundreds (38). York, which is the greatest city mentioned in that famous record, contained only 1418 houses, of which there were 540 uninhabited (39). In Exeter there were only 315 houses, and in Warwick 223. Upon the whole, it seems very probable, that Britain

(36) Gildæ Hist. c. 11—26.

(37) Nennii Hist. Brit. c. 64. See Appendix, Number 11.

(38) Brady on Burghs, *passim*.

(39) *Id.* p. 10.



was not much more populous in the times of the heptarchy, than it had been in the ancient British times before the first Roman invasion; not half so populous as in the flourishing times of the Roman government; and that from the establishment of the English monarchy to the conquest, it did not at any time contain above one million and a half of people. So fatal was the fall of the Roman empire to the populousness of its provinces, and so slowly was that loss repaired!

## SECTION II.

*The history of the different ranks of people,—of magistrates,—and of courts of justice, in Britain, from the arrival of the Saxons, A. D. 449, to the landing of William duke of Normandy, A. D. 1066.*

HAVING, in the preceding section, given a brief delineation of the political divisions of the British territories, in the period we are now considering, into kingdoms, provinces or shires, trithings, hundreds, and decennaries, it is proper to proceed in taking a view—of the several ranks of people by whom these territories were inhabited, with their respective rights and privileges,—the magistrates by whom these different districts or divisions were governed, with their several powers,—and the various courts in which these magistrates presided. In doing this, it seems most natural to begin at the lowest rank of people, magistrates, and courts, and regularly proceed to the higher; as this is the course in which appeals proceed in the administration of justice.

The lowest order of people among the Anglo-Saxons, and the other nations of Britain, in this period, were slaves, who, with their wives and children, were the property of their masters (1). Besides those who were native slaves, or slaves by birth, others frequently fell into this wretched state, by various means; as, by an ill

(1) Reliquiæ Spelman. p. 250, 251. Leges Wallicæ, p. 206—324.

run at play,—by the fate of war,—or by forfeiting their freedom by their crimes, or even by contracting debts which they were not able to pay (2). These unhappy people, who were numerous, formed an article, both of internal and foreign trade; only if the slave was a Christian, he was not to be sold to a Jew or a Pagan; or if he belonged to the same nation with his master, he was not to be sold beyond sea (3). Slaves, however, were of various kinds among the Anglo-Saxons, employed in various works, and were not all in an equal state of thralldom. Some of them were called *villani*, or *villans*, because they dwelt at the villages belonging to their masters, and performed the servile labours of cultivating their lands, to which they were annexed, and transferred with these lands from one to another (4). Others were domestic slaves, and performed various offices about the houses and families of their masters (5). Some of these domestic slaves of the king and the nobility were taught the mechanic arts, which they practised for the benefit of their owners; and the greatest number of the mechanics of those times seem to have been in a state of servitude (6). Slaves were not supposed to have any family or relations who sustained any loss by their death; and therefore when one of them was killed by his master, no mulct was paid, because the master was supposed to be the only loser; when slain by another, his price or manbote was paid to his master (7). In a word, slaves of the lowest order were considered merely as animals of burden, and parts of their owner's living stock. In the laws of Wales, it is expressly said, "That a master hath the same right to his slaves as to his cattle (8)."

Slavery  
mitigated  
and dimi-  
nished.

The horrors of this cruel servitude were gradually mitigated; and many of those unhappy wretches were raised from this abject state to the privileges of humanity. The introduction of Christianity contributed not a little, both to alleviate the weight of servitude, and diminish the number of slaves. By the canons of the church, which were in those times incorporated with the laws of the land, and of the same authority, Christians were

(2) Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 24. Leges Inæ, c. 7.

(3) Ibid. Higbriht Excerpt. c. 149. 150.

(4) Glossar. Spelman, and Du Cange in voc. Villanus.

(5) Leges Wallicæ, p. 453.

(6) Du Cange ad voc. Servi ministeriales.

(7) Leges Wallicæ, p. 324.

(8) Id. p. 206.

commanded to allow their slaves certain portions of time to work for their own benefit; by which they acquired property,—the bishops had authority to regulate the quantity of work to be done by slaves,—and to take care that no man used his slave harshly, but as a fellow-Christian (9). The bishops and clergy recommended the manumission of slaves as a most charitable and meritorious action; and in order to set the example, they procured a law to be made, that all the English slaves of every bishop should be set at liberty at his death; and that every other bishop and abbot in the kingdom should set three slaves at liberty (10). But after all these mitigations of the severities of slavery, and diminutions of the number of slaves, the yoke of servitude was still very heavy, and the greatest part of the labourers, mechanics, and common people, groaned under that yoke at the conclusion of this period (11).

The next class or rank of people in Britain, in this period, was composed of those who were called *frilazin*; who had been slaves, but had either purchased, or by some other means obtained, their liberty (12). Though these were in reality free men, they were not considered as of the same rank and dignity with those who had been born free; but were still in a more ignoble and dependent condition, either on their former masters, or on some new patrons. This custom the Anglo-Saxons seem to have derived from their ancestors in Germany, among whom those who had been made free did not differ much in point of dignity or importance in the state, from those who continued in servitude (13). This distinction between those who had been made free, and those who enjoy freedom by descent from a long race of freemen, still prevails in many parts of Germany; and particularly in the original seats of the Anglo-Saxons (14). Many of the inhabitants of towns and cities in England, in this period, seem to have been of this class of men, who were in a kind of middle state between slaves and freemen (15).

(9) Spel. Concil. p. 450, &amp;c.

(10) Id. ibid. p. 330, 331.

(11) Vide Doomſday-book passim.

(12) Spel. Gloss. in voc.

(13) Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 25.

(14) Heineccii Elementa Juris German. t. 6. p. 27.

(15) Brady of Burghs.

Ceorls.

The third class or rank of people in Britain, in the period we are now considering, consisted of those who were completely free, and descended from a long race of freemen. This numerous and respectable body of men, who were called *ceorls*, constituted a middle class, between the labourers and mechanics (who were generally slaves, or descended from slaves), on the one hand, and the nobility on the other. They might go where they pleased, and pursue any way of life that was most agreeable to their humour; but so many of them applied to agriculture, and farming the lands of the nobility, that a ceorl was the most common name for a husbandman or farmer in the Anglo-Saxon times (16). These ceorls, however, seem in general to have been a kind of gentlemen farmers; and if any one of them prospered so well as to acquire the property of five hydes of land, upon which he had a church, a kitchen, a bell-house, and great gate, and obtained a seat and office in the king's court, he was esteemed a nobleman or thane (17). If a ceorl applied to learning, and attained to priest's orders, he was also considered as a thane; his *weregild*, or price of his life, was the same, and his testimony had the same weight in a court of justice (18). When he applied to trade, and made three voyages beyond sea, in a ship of his own, and with a cargo belonging to himself, he was also advanced to the dignity of a thane (19). But if a ceorl had a greater propensity to arms than to learning, trade, or agriculture, he then became the *sithcundman*, or military retainer, to some potent and warlike earl, and was called the *huscarle* of such an earl (20). If one of these huscarles acquitted himself so well as to obtain from his patron, either five hydes of land, or a gilt sword, helmet, and breastplate, as a reward of his valour, he was likewise considered as a thane (21). Thus the temple of honour stood open to these ceorls, whether they applied themselves to agriculture, commerce, letters, or arms, which were then the only professions esteemed worthy of a freeman.

(16) Somner. *Dictionary Saxon*.(17) Wilkins *Leges Saxonice*, p. 70.(18) *Spel. Conell.* p. 400. (19) Wilkins *Leges Saxon.* p. 71.(20) *Spelman's Gloss in voc.* (21) Wilkins *Leges Saxon.* p. 71.



All those above the rank of ceorls were thanes or no-<sup>Thanes.</sup>bles. There were several degrees of nobility, or of thanes, among the Anglo-Saxons, though it is very difficult to mark the distinctions between these degrees with certainty and precision. The earl's or alderman's thane seems to have been the lowest degree of nobility; and next to him he who had been advanced to that dignity on account of his promotion in the church, or his success in trade or agriculture (22). The king's thanes seem to have been of three different degrees, according to their different degrees of wealth, or favour at court, as appears from the hereots to be paid to the king at their death. The hereot of a king's thane of the lowest rank was one horse saddled, and the thane's arms;—of the second or middle rank, two horses, one saddled and one unsaddled, two swords, two spears, two shields, and fifty mancusses of gold;—of the first or highest rank, four horses, two saddled and two unsaddled, four swords, four spears, four shields, and one hundred mancusses of gold (23). This is a sufficient proof, that these three classes of thanes were very different from each other in point of wealth and dignity; though they were all noble, attendants upon, and retainers of the king; the great ornaments of his court in times of peace, and the chief defence of his person in times of war.

Nothing can be more obvious than that the Anglo-Saxon thanes, or nobles, were the genuine descendants and representatives of the ancient German companions of their princes, who are thus described by Tacitus; The Anglo-Saxon thanes the same with the ancient German Comites.

“ The most noble are not ashamed to appear among the  
 “ companions and attendants of their brave and warlike  
 “ princes. Of these companions there are different  
 “ ranks, according to their different degrees of favour  
 “ with the princes whom they attend; which fires them  
 “ with ambition to acquire the first place in their esteem.  
 “ Nor are princes less ambitious to increase the number  
 “ and valour of their retainers: for to be surrounded by  
 “ a numerous band of brave undaunted followers, is  
 “ their glory, their strength, their ornament in peace,  
 “ their defence in war. In the day of battle, the prince  
 “ strives to excel his followers in acts of valour, and  
 “ they to imitate his example; he fights for victory,

(22) Wilkins *Leges Saxon.* p. 71.(23) *Id.* p. 144.

“ and

“ and they for him. From him they receive the plentiful feast, the war-horse, and bloody spear, as the marks of his approbation, and the rewards of their attachment (24)”. Hengist and Horfa, and Cerdic, and all the other Anglo-Saxon chieftains, who founded kingdoms in Britain, were attended by numerous bands of these brave companions, thanes, and followers, who contributed greatly to their success. When the conquests, therefore, were completed by the expulsion, submission, or slaughter of the native Britons, the conquerors, with general consent, bestowed certain portions of the conquered lands on these valiant companions of their toils and victories. These lands were called *thane-lands*, and were granted with that frank and generous spirit with which rude unpolished warriors are animated; without any of those painful restrictions, and manifold services and prestations, that were afterwards invented by artful feudalists. For the Anglo-Saxon thanes were under no obligations on account of their lands, except the three following, which were indispensably necessary to the defence and improvement of their country:—To attend the king with their followers in military expeditions,—to assist in building and defending the royal castles.—and in keeping the bridges and highways in proper repair (25). To these obligations all proprietors of land (even the churchmen for a long time not excepted) were subjected; and these services were considered as due to their country, rather than to the persons of their kings; and were agreed to by all as being necessary to their own preservation and conveniency. Such were the thanes or nobles of England, and of the low-lands of Scotland, where the Saxon language was spoken, in the times we are now considering; and such indeed were the nobles in all the kingdoms of Europe that were founded by the northern nations on the ruins of the Roman empire, being all called by names of the same import and meaning (26). Among the Scots and Picts,

(24) Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 13, 14.

(25) Reliquiæ Spelman. p. 22.

(26) Thegim, or thane, signifies a minister, or honourable retainer, from the verb *thennian*, to minister. The Vassal, Druides, Leudes, Antrustiones, Gascendii, and Garcingin of the Lombards, Franks, Goths, and Wisigoths, were all nobles of the same kind and origin with our thanes; and all these names signify ministers or retainers. See Squire on the English Constitution, p. 125.

the genuine descendents of the ancient Caledonians, those who bore the greatest resemblance to the Anglo-Saxon thanes, were called *tierna*; and among the Welsh, the true posterity of the ancient Britons, *teyrn*, which signify the great proprietors of land (27).

The thanes, who were the only nobility among the Anglo-Saxons, were a very numerous body of men, comprehending all the considerable landholders in England, and filling up that space in society between the ceorls or yeomanry on the one hand, and the royal family on the other; which is now occupied both by the nobility and gentry. In times of war, they constituted the flower of their armies, and in times of peace they swelled the trains of their kings, and added greatly to the splendour of their courts, especially at the three great festivals of Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide. From this body all the chief officers, both civil and military, as aldermen, greeves, earls, heretogens, &c. were taken; and to obtain some of these offices was the great object of their ambition. Before they obtained an office, their lands were their only support, and they lived in greater or less affluence, according to the extent of their estates. These they divided into two parts; one of which they called their *inlands* and the other their *outlands*. Their inlands they kept in their own immediate possession, and cultivated them by the hands of their slaves and villains, in order to raise provisions for their families; their outlands they granted to ceorls or farmers, either for one year, or for a term of years; for which they received a certain stipulated proportion of their produce annually. These customs had long prevailed among their ancestors in Germany, and were adhered to by their posterity in England to the conclusion of this period (28).

The princes of the several royal families among the Anglo-Saxons were considered as of a rank superior to the other nobles, and distinguished by the title of *Clitones*, or *Illustrious* (29). The eldest son of the reigning prince, or the presumptive heir of the crown, was called the *Ætheling*, or the *Most Noble*, and was the next person in dignity after the king and queen (30). Among the ancient Britons or Welsh, in the beginning of this period, the pre-

State of  
the thanes,  
and of  
their lands

Princes of  
the blood.

(27) Macpherson's Dissertat. p. 179.

(28) Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 25.

(29) Spelman. Gloss. in voc. (30) Id. ibid. in voc.

sumptive heir of the crown or principality was called *Gurthddrychjad*, or the *appointed Prince*; but by their frequent intercourse with, and partial subjection to, the English, they gradually adopted many of their laws, customs, and titles of honour; and particularly called their heir-apparent the *Edling*. This prince had many high privileges and considerable revenues assigned him, to enable him to support his dignity. All the king's officers and servants were commanded to obey and serve the Edling, whenever he required them, without reward; and he had the free use of all the royal houses, horses, dogs, hawks, &c. (31). Among the Scots and Picts, in this period, the presumptive, or rather the appointed heir, to their respective crowns, was called the *Tanist*, and enjoyed the same honours and privileges with the *Ætheling* of the English, and the Edling of the Welsh (32).

Ranks of  
women.

Such were the several ranks in society among the Anglo-Saxons, and other nations of Britain, in the period we are now examining, viz. slaves, freedmen, ceorls, thanes, and princes of the blood. In this enumeration no notice hath been taken of the fair sex, because they were always of the same rank with their parents before marriage, and with their husbands after marriage; except female slaves, who did not become free by marrying a freeman, but were commonly made free before, in order to render them capable of such a marriage (33).

Anglo-Saxon magistrates, &c.

It is now proper to take a view of those who were invested with offices among the Anglo-Saxons, and other British nations, in this period, with the powers and emoluments annexed to these offices, the courts in which those who held them presided, and such other circumstances as are worthy of attention, and can be discovered.

Slaves incapable of being magistrates.

The lowest, though they were the most numerous, class of men among the Anglo-Saxons were absolutely incapable of any office of power, trust, or honour; for being slaves themselves, and not their own masters, they could have no authority over others, even over their own wives and children. The truth is, those unhappy men could not so much as call their lives their own; for these might have been taken from them by their masters

(31) *Leges Walliæ*, l. i. c. 9.

(32) Dr. Macpherson's *Illustr.* 13.

(33) Hicetisi *Dissertatio epistolariæ*, p. 13.



with perfect impunity, and by any other person, for paying their price to their owners (34). For some time after the settlement of the Saxons in England, their slaves were in the same circumstances with their horses, oxen, cows, and sheep, except that it was not fashionable to kill and eat them. After the introduction of Christianity, the government began to take some notice of this miserable class of men, and to make some little distinctions between them and other animals. By one law, if a master gave his slave a blow, of which he died within twenty-four hours, he was to pay a small mulct to the king; by another, a master was not allowed to pay his fine for being guilty of adultery, in slaves, but only in cattle or money; but still they were very far from being capable of any office (35). Even those slaves who obtained their freedom, very seldom attained to any office of power or trust: thinking themselves sufficiently happy in being under the protection of government, they hardly ever aspired to any share in the administration of it (36).

Among the ancient Germans, every father of a family was a kind of magistrate, and had a great degree of authority over his wife and children, though it doth not seem to have extended to the power of life and death, as it did among the Gauls (37). After the Saxons settled in England, the masters of families still retained very great power; because they were responsible to the public for the conduct of all the members of their respective families, and obliged to pay the fines for all the crimes which they committed. If a stranger staid above three days and nights in any family, the master of that family acquired the same authority over him, because he became in like manner answerable for his conduct (38).

One of the lowest magistrates among the Anglo-Saxons was called the *borsholder*, or *tithing-man*, whose authority extended only over one freeburgh, tithing, or decennary, consisting of ten families. Every freeman who wished to enjoy the protection of the laws, and not to be treated as a vagabond, was under a necessity of be-

Heads of families.

Borsholder.

(34) Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 25.

(35) Wilkins Leges Sax. p. 29. Johnson's Canons, A. D. 877.

(36) Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 25.

(37) Id. c. 19. Cæsar de Bel. Gal. l. 6. c. 19.

(38) Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 9.

ing admitted a member of the tithing where he and his family resided ; and in order to obtain this admission, it was as necessary for him to maintain a good reputation ; because all the members of each tithing being mutual pledges and sureties for each other, and the whole tithing sureties to the king for the good behaviour of all its members, they were very cautious of admitting any into their society who were of bad or doubtful characters. Each tithing formed a little state or commonwealth within itself, and chose one of its most respectable members for its head, who was sometimes called the alderman of such a tithing or freeburgh, on account of his age and experience, but most commonly *borsholder*, from the Saxon words *borh*, a surety, and *alder*, a head or chief (39). This magistrate had authority to call together the members of his tithing, to preside in their meetings, and to put their sentences in execution. The members of each tithing, with their tithing-man or borsholder at their head, constituted a court of justice, in which all the little controversies arising within the tithing were determined. If any dispute of great difficulty or importance happened, or if either of the parties was not willing to submit to a sentence given in the tithing-court, the cause was referred, or appealed, to the next superior court, or court of the hundred. At these tithing-courts, the arms belonging to the tithing were from time to time produced and inspected, new members were admitted, and testimonials given to such members as had occasion to remove into the bounds of another tithing. For as the tithing was answerable to the public for the good behaviour of all its members, no man could be member of a tithing in which he did not reside ; because he could not be under the immediate inspection of those who were answerable for his conduct. If any member of a tithing committed a crime, and made his escape, the tithing to which he belonged was allowed thirty-one days to pursue and apprehend him. If the tithing did not produce the criminal at the end of that period, the head of that tithing, with two of its most respectable members, together with the heads of the three next tithings, and two members out of each, making in all a body of twelve men, were obliged to make oath before a superior magistrate,

(39) Spelman. Gloss. p. 85.

“ That

“ That none of the members of the tithing to which the criminal belonged had been accomplices in his crime ;  
 “ —that they had not connived at his escape ;—and  
 “ that they had been at all possible pains to apprehend  
 “ and bring him to justice.” If the tithing could not give this ample evidence of their perfect innocence, they were obliged to pay the mulct prescribed by the law for the crime committed. The severity of this last regulation was afterwards a little mitigated; and the oaths of all the members of the tithing to which the criminal belonged, to the above effect, were admitted as a sufficient exculpation, provided they promised upon oath, at the same time, to present him to justice as soon as they could apprehend him (40).

As all the members of a tithing were mutual sureties, so they were commonly mutual friends. They were all of the same rank ; because thanes were not members of any tithing, the family of a thane being considered as a tithing within itself, and the thane responsible to the public for all its members (41). A tithing was sometimes called a neighbourhood, and its members the neighbours, who were strongly attached to each other's interest, and frequently united by the ties of blood. The neighbours fought in one band in the day of battle, and often eat at one table in the days of peace. If any quarrel happened at the common table of the neighbourhood, a severe fine was paid by him who was to blame (42). If one of the neighbours was wronged, all the rest assisted to procure redress ; if one sustained a loss by fire, the death of cattle, or any other accident, all the rest contributed to repair the loss ; if one of the neighbours became poor, the rest supported him ; all the neighbours attended all the funerals, marriages, and festivals of the neighbourhood ; and, finally, if one of the neighbours, or members of a tithing, behaved ill, he was solemnly expelled the society ; which was one of the greatest disgraces and calamities in which a man could be involved (43) : from that moment he sustained a total loss of character, became an outlaw and vagabond, and was exposed to a thousand insults.

It doth not seem to be possible for human prudence to contrive any political arrangement more admirably

Great union among the members of a tithing.

Advantages of this institution.

(40) Wilkins *Leges Saxon.* p. 201, 202. (41) *Id.* p. 202.

(42) *Id.* p. 16. (43) *Spelman Vita Elfridi.* p. 73—82.

adapted than this was, for promoting the peace and good order of society. We need not therefore be surpris'd to hear of the prodigious effects it is said to have produced, when it was fully established and strictly executed in the reign of Alfred the Great. "By these means" (says Ingulphus), "so profound a tranquillity, and such perfect security, were established over all the land, that if a traveller left, or lost, ever so great a sum of money in the open fields or highways, he was sure of finding it next morning, or even a month after, entire and untouched (44)."

Societies  
formed in  
imitation  
of tithings.

The advantages of this excellent institution were so great, that many, both of the nobility and clergy, who were by law exempted from the necessity of being members of any tithing, formed voluntary associations among themselves upon the same plan. The learned Dr. Hickes hath published the rules which the members of several of these voluntary fraternities bound themselves to observe: from whence it appears, that they were exactly similar to those observed by the members of tithings or freeburgs (45). Each of these voluntary associations had a chief or head, invested with the same powers with a tithing-man or bortholder: most of them had also common tables, at which the members frequently feasted together; several of their fines were paid in honey or malt, which were no doubt designed to be made into mead or ale for these entertainments; and when a quarrel happened at these feasts, the offending party was obliged to pay the same fine that the member of a tithing was obliged to pay for the same offence (46). In a word, there seems to have been no other difference between a *sodalitium*, or fraternity of thanes, bishops, abbots, and priests, and a tithing or freeburg of ceorls and freemen, but this, that the one was voluntary, and the other necessary. It even appears, that though the nobility and clergy were not obliged to become members of any tithing, as that would have implied a distrust of their good behaviour, unbecoming their dignity and character; yet they were encouraged to form such voluntary associations among themselves, for their own security, and the public good; and several laws were made re-

(44) Ingulph. Hist.

(45) Hickesii Dissertatio epistol. p. 18—22.

(46) Id. ibid.



specting these voluntary associations (47). Whether the revival of this Anglo-Saxon institution would be any improvement of the present system of police, it doth not become a private member of society to determine. It is perhaps too exact and perfect to be practicable, in a populous and extensive empire.

The next magistrate superior to the tithing-man in rank and power, was called the *hundredary*, who presided over a district that contained ten tithings, or that division of a shire that was called a *hundred*. This magistrate was commonly, if not always, a thane or nobleman residing within the hundred, and elected by the other members into his office; which was both honourable and lucrative (48). It belonged to him—to appoint the times and places for the meetings of the hundred-court,—to preside in that court,—to put its sentences in execution,—to inspect the arms belonging to the hundred, &c.; and for the performance of these offices, he received one-third of all the fines imposed in his court, with a certain quantity of corn from each member for maintaining his dogs, which destroyed wolves, foxes, and other noxious animals. The hundredary was the captain of his hundred in times of war, as well as their civil magistrate in times of peace. This office was known among the ancient Germans, and was long retained among the Franks, Lombards, and Wisigoths, as well as the Anglo-Saxons (49).

As the hundredary was the next magistrate above the tithing-man, so the hundred-court was the next above the tithing-court. All the members of the several tithings within the hundred were members of the hundred-court, and obliged to attend its meetings, under pretty severe penalties. This court commonly met once every month; and all the members, in imitation of their German ancestors, came to it in their arms; from whence it obtained the name of the *wapentac*: for it was a constant custom at the beginning of each meeting, for all the members to touch the hundredary's spear with their's, in token of their acknowledging his authority, and being ready to fight under his command (50). In these courts,

(47) Johnson's Canons, A. D. 752. sub fin. Spelman Con. p. 407. 448. 495.

(48) Spelman Gloss. in voc. p. 301, &c.

(49) Lindenbrog. Gloss. voc. Centenarius. Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 6. 12.

(50) Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 203.

the archdeacon, and sometimes the bishop, presided with the hundredary, and both civil and ecclesiastical affairs were regulated; an inquiry was made into the state of the several tithings; many petty causes came before them, either in the first instance, between persons belonging to different tithings, or by appeals from the tithing-courts. The hundred-courts had not authority to condemn any person to death or slavery; and if any man thought himself injured by their decisions, he might appeal to the trithing, or next superior court (51). The proceedings in these courts were very summary, and every thing was determined by the votes of all the members, the hundredary having only a right to collect the votes, and pronounce the sentences. In these hundred-courts, sales of land, and other important transactions between the members of the same hundred, were published and confirmed (52).

Government of towns.

The government of towns and cities in this period very much resembled the government of rural hundreds. The chief magistrate in these places was commonly called the *alderman* or *towngrieve*, or if they were sea-ports, the *portgrieve*; and each of these had the same authority in his town, or city, that the hundredary had in his hundred. The chief court in towns and cities was called the *burgemote*, or *folckmote*, at which all the burghesses attended, all the affairs of the community were regulated, and the disputes between one burghess and another determined. Besides the stated monthly meetings of this court, the alderman or portgrieve had authority to call extraordinary ones, upon sudden emergencies, by the sound of the motbell (53).

Trithing-man and trithing-court.

The next magistrate above the hundredary was called the *trithingman* or *lathgrieve*, who presided over that division of a county that was called a *trithing*, and in some places a *lath*, which contained three, four, or more hundreds. The trithing-court in which this magistrate presided, was composed of the members of the several hundred-courts within the trithing: and in it were tried appeals from the hundred-courts, and causes between members of different hundreds. In this court also the

(51) Du Cange Gloss. voc. Centenarii. Spelman's Gloss. voc. Hundredarius, Wapentachium.

(52) Dogdale's Origines juridicales, p. 27.

(53) Wulkins Leges Saxonicae, p. 204.

sales of estates, last wills, and other important transactions, were published and confirmed (54). But as this link in the chain of courts and magistrates was sooner left out, as unnecessary, than any of the rest, and hath left fewer vestiges behind it, a more minute description of it would be improper.

The next magistrate above the tithingman was the Alderman alderman, or, as he was called in the Danish times, or earl. the earl, of that division of a kingdom that was called a shire, or county. The alderman, or earl of a shire, was a person of the highest dignity, and greatest power, among the Anglo-Saxons; and therefore this office was commonly enjoyed by the thanes of the largest estates and most ancient families. Possessed both of the civil and military government of his shire, the alderman was a little king within his own territories, and assumed the titles of *sub-king* and *prince* in subscribing charters and other deeds (55). When he appeared at the head of the military forces of his shire in times of war, he was called a *duke* or *heretogen*, which signify a *general*, or *commander* of an army; and was indeed a high and potent prince (56). In the most ancient times of the Anglo-Saxon government, the aldermen or earls were appointed by the king; but towards the conclusion of this period, these great officers seem to have been elected by the freeholders of the shire, in the shiregemot or county-court (57). To enable them to support their dignity, the earls enjoyed certain lands, which were called the *earls lands*, and had a right to one-third of all the fines imposed within the shire, and to several other perquisites (58). The office of earl was so far from being hereditary in the most ancient period of the Anglo-Saxon government, that it was not so much as for life, but only during the good pleasure of the sovereign, and their own good behaviour (59). Towards the conclusion of this period, it appears, that the great earls were most commonly, though not always, succeeded by their sons in their earldoms. But this seems to have been owing to the increasing power of the aristocracy, and to the pro-

(54) Wilkins Leges Saxonice, p. 204. Hist. Eliens. apud Gale, t. 1. p. 479.

(55) Selden's Tit. Hon. p. 502.

(56) Spelman Gloss. p. 288.

(57) Annal. Saxon. p. 49. Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 205.

(58) Spel. Gloss. p. 141, 142.

(59) Id. ibid.



digious wealth and influence of a few great families, rather than to any formal change in the constitution. From the same cause, it became also very common in those times, for one of these great thanes to possess two, three, or more earldoms; which rendered them too powerful for subjects, and at length enabled one of them to usurp the crown (60).

Shirege-  
rieve.

As the aldermen or earls were always chosen from amongst the greatest thanes, who in those times were generally more addicted to arms than to letters, they were but ill qualified for the administration of justice, and performing the civil duties of their offices. Some of these great men had also offices at court which required their attendance, or were absent from their shires on other accounts; or so much engaged in hunting and other rural sports, that they could not administer justice in their own persons. To remedy these inconveniencies, there was an officer in every shire, inferior indeed to the earl in dignity, but commonly his superior in learning, and the knowledge of the laws, who was called the *shiregerieve*; and in the absence of the alderman supplied his place. When the alderman was present, the shiregerieve was his assessor in judgment, and his chief minister in the discharge of every part of his duty (61). In the most ancient times, the shiregerieves were appointed by the king, but (if we can depend on the testimony of the pretended laws of Edward the Confessor) they were afterwards chosen in the shiregemote (62). All the other nations of Gothic and German origin, who founded kingdoms in different parts of Europe on the ruins of the Roman empire, had officers of the same kind with the Anglo-Saxon shiregerieves; which is a sufficient evidence of their great antiquity (63).

Lawyers  
by profes-  
sion.

After the Anglo-Saxon laws were committed to writing, it became necessary that some persons should read and study them with particular attention, in order to understand their true intent and meaning. This gave rise to lawyers by profession, who, in the language of England in those times, were called *rad-boran* or *lahmen*, and in Latin *rhetores* or *causidici* (64). These

(60) Harold. (61) Spel. Gloss. in voc. Grasio.

(62) Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 203.

(63) Gloss. apud Lindenbrog. voc. Graphio.

(64) Wilkin Leges Saxon. p. 125. Hist. Eliens. apud Gale, t. 1. p. 469.



were the same kind of persons who were called *scabini*, *rachimburgi*, or *sagibarones*, by the Germans, Longobards, Franks, and other nations of Europe, in the times we are now examining (65); for all these are Teutonic words a little latinized, and of the same import with the *ræd-boran* and *lahmen* of the Anglo-Saxons; implying a capacity of reading, and a knowledge of the laws.

Some of these *lahmen*, i. e. law-men, after having undergone an examination as to their knowledge of the law, were appointed assessors to the aldermen, shireg-rieves, and hundredaries; and others of them acted as advocates and pleaders at the bar (66). In the most ancient times, when there were but few who could read, or understood the laws, three of these law-men were thought sufficient to assist an alderman or shiregerieve in judgment; but as the numbers of readers increased, the number of these assessors was raised, first to seven, and afterwards to twelve (67). These assessors, who were in reality judges, took a solemn oath, that they would faithfully discharge the duties of their office, and not suffer any innocent man to be condemned, nor any guilty person to be acquitted (58). Ingulphus seems to think, that Alfred the Great was the first who instituted this order of law-men as assessors to the ordinary judges; but there is sufficient evidence, that this institution was more ancient, both in England and in other nations of Europe (69). These ancient sages of the law are very plainly described in the laws of king Ina, who flourished in the end of the seventh and beginning of the eighth century. "If any fight in the house of an alderman, or in the house of one of the famous wise men, let him make compensation with sixty shillings (70)."

Some learned men have been of opinion, that the *ræd-boran* and *lahmen* of the Anglo-Saxons, were the same with the jurors or jurymen of more modern times, who

(65) Du Cange Gloss. in voc. *Scabini*, *Rachimburgi*, *Sagibarones*. Heineccii Opera, t. 6. p. 642.

(66) Hikefit Dissertat. epist. p. 34. Leges Wallicæ, p. 30. 124.

(67) Du Cange Gloss. voc. *Sagibarones*. Id. voc. *Rachimburgi*. Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 125.

(68) Wilkins Leges Sax. p. 117. Leges Wallicæ, p. 30.

(69) Ingulf. Hist. Crowland in Alfred.

(70) Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 16.

who have acted a very important part in the administration of justice in England for several ages past. But this opinion is evidently liable to very many objections. It is founded on one law of king Alfred's, and two of king Ethelred's, which merit a moment's consideration. King Alfred's law may be thus translated: "If a king's thane is accused of murder, let him purge himself by twelve king's thanes. If an inferior thane is accused, let him purge himself by eleven of his equals, and one king's thane (71)." This law seems rather to relate to compurgators, which will be hereafter described, than to jurors. The first law of Ethelred is to this purpose,— "That there may be a court held in every wapontack, let twelve of the most venerable thanes, with the gerieve, stand forth and swear on the holy things put into their hands, that they will not condemn any innocent, nor acquit any guilty person (72)." This law directs the manner of constituting the judges in the hundred-courts, which were the president and his twelve assessors, forming a permanent body. The second law of Ethelred is this: "Twelve law-men shall administer justice between the Welsh and English, six Englishmen and six Welshmen (73)." This was rather an article of a treaty than a law, and constituted a court to determine controversies between the subjects of different states. In the third volume, we shall have an opportunity of investigating the origin of juries.

The shire-  
gemote.

The court in which the alderman or earl of the shire, together with the bishop, the shiregerieve, and the law-men their assessors, presided, was called the *shiregemote*. This was a court of great authority and importance in the Anglo-Saxon times; a kind of little parliament, in which a great variety of business, civil, military, and ecclesiastical, was transacted. One great or general shiregemot was held in every county in the spring, and another in autumn, at a stated time and place, where the bishop of the diocese, the alderman of the shire, the shiregerieve, law-men, magistrates, thanes, abbots, with all the clergy and landholders of the county, were obliged to be present. The meeting was opened with a discourse by the bishop, explaining, out of the scriptures and ecclesiastical canons, their several duties, as good Christians and members of the church. After this, the

(71) Wilkins *Leges Saxon.* p. 47.

(72) *Id.* p. 117.

(73) *Id.* p. 125.

alderman,

alderman, or one of his assessors, made a discourse on the laws of the land, and the duties of good subjects and good citizens. When these preliminaries were over, they proceeded to try and determine, first, the causes of the church, next the pleas of the crown, and last of all the controversies of private parties (74). As soon as a cause was opened, and sufficiently understood, and the evidence produced on both sides, it was determined by the votes of the whole assembly, which were collected by the law-men, who drew up and pronounced the sentence (75). If any question of law arose, it was answered by the law-men out of the dome-book, or law-book, which always lay before them in court (76). Besides the trial both of criminal and civil causes, a variety of other business was transacted at the shiregemots; such as the sale of lands, donations to the church, the publication and confirmation of testaments, &c. (77).

Though the shiregemot sometimes continued several days, it was impossible to finish all its business in the two annual general meetings; and therefore county-courts were held by the shiregerieve from four weeks to four weeks, to determine such causes as could not be overtaken by the general shiregemots. At these lesser county-courts, which are sometimes called *folkmotes*, none were obliged to attend but the shiregerieves, the law-men, the parties and witnesses in the causes to be tried, and such as had immediate business (78).

Whether there was any stated legal magistrate below the king, and superior to the aldermen, or earls of counties, in the Anglo-Saxon times, may be justly questioned. The name of chancellor was not then indeed unknown; but he seems to have had little authority or jurisdiction, and to have acted as a kind of private secretary to the king; for which reason he is sometimes called the king's scribe or notary (79). This office, however, giving those who were invested with it frequent access to the persons and secrets of their royal masters, procured them no little influence, and gradually became more and more important.

(74) Reliquiæ Spelman. p. 54.

(75) Hicessii Dissertatio epist. p. 31, 32.

(76) Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 48.

(77) Hicessii Dissertatio epist. p. 30.

(78) Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 50. (79) Ingulf. Hist. Croyl.

Anglo-Saxon  
cyning or  
king.

The chief magistrate in all the states established by the Anglo-Saxons in this island, was called the *cyning* or *king*; a title of the most honourable import in their language, as including the ideas of wisdom, power, and valour, the most necessary qualifications of a sovereign, both in peace and war (80). It is true, that those chieftains who conducted the several bands of adventurers out of Germany into Britain, were at their arrival only heretoges; a title which signified no more than the leader of an army during an expedition, which conveyed no authority in times of peace, and was commonly of very short duration (81). But as those armies of adventurers met with a vigorous opposition from the native Britons, which continued many years, the authority of their heretoges or leaders lasted long, and by degrees became firm and well established. This encouraged these leaders, with the consent, and perhaps at the desire, of their followers, to assume the more honourable and permanent title of king; though it is hardly to be imagined, that this new title occasioned at first any very remarkable change in the constitution, or brought with it any great accession of authority. It is even probable, that the several Anglo-Saxon armies bestowed the title of kings on their respective leaders, as much to do honour to themselves as to their leaders. While they were commanded only by heretoges, they were considered as a collection of adventurers engaged in a piratical or plundering expedition; but when they had kings at their heads, they appeared in the more respectable light of regular states or nations. This account of the origin of kingly government among the Anglo-Saxons in this island is very much confirmed by what happened in the north of England, and south of Scotland, in the same period. Oëta and Ebeffa conducted a very large colony out of Germany into Britain, A. D. 460, with which they settled between the walls of Severus and Antoninus Pius, or the rivers Tyne and Forth. This country being at that time almost desolate, they met with little or no opposition; and therefore did not bestow the title of king on any of their leaders, till near a century after, when they came to be involved in long and bloody wars.

(80.) Samner Diction. Saxon. in voc.

(81.) Chron. Saxon. p. 13.



It would be very improper to swell this work by entering deep into the political altercations of modern writers concerning—the rules of succession to the crown in the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms,—the duties, prerogatives, and revenues, of the Anglo-Saxon kings. It is more becoming the dignity of history, to lay before the reader, in a few words, what appears to be the truth on these subjects, as far as it can be discovered from the genuine monuments of those times.

Each of those brave victorious chieftains who founded a state in this island by his conquests, was highly honoured by his followers during life; and his valour and victories, to which they owed their establishment, were remembered with admiration even after his death. This veneration for the father and founder of their state inspired them, and their posterity for a considerable time, with great respect and affection for his descendants, who were considered by them as inheriting the virtues of their great ancestor, and on that account intitled to inherit also his wealth and honours. Agreeable to this, we may observe, that the succession to the crown in all the kingdoms of the heptarchy was at the beginning remarkably clear and regular, the eldest son succeeding his father, without interruption, for several generations. This is a sufficient indication, that this most natural and obvious rule of succession was not unknown to our Saxon ancestors at their first establishment in this island; and even that it was the rule which they proposed to follow. It was, however, too perfect to be strictly and invariably observed in those rude and unsettled times. By degrees it was violated, and greater and greater breaches made in the succession. At first it was thought no great stretch for the brother of the deceased prince, who was of a mature age, and warlike character, to supplant his infant-nephew; as fierce unpolished nations could hardly form an idea of being governed by a child, or by a regent in his name. This is so true, that there is but one example of a minority, and that a short and unfortunate one, in all the history of the heptarchy (81). When this breach in the succession was become familiar, they proceeded to greater deviations; and sometimes a prince of the royal family, who was at a great distance

Rules of  
succession,  
&c. in the  
Anglo-  
Saxon  
kingdoms.

The crown  
here trans-  
ferred, but not  
strictly.

(81) Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. 5. c. 24.

from the throne, took possession of it, to the exclusion of many who were nearer; but still the veneration of the people for the family of the founder of their state was so great, that no man who was not of that family dared to cast an ambitious eye on the crown. At last, however, this veneration was so much diminished, by length of time, and by the vices, follies, and quarrels, of the several royal families, that the thrones of all the kingdoms of the heptarchy, that of Wessex alone excepted, were seized by bold usurpers, who had no connection with the families of their founders; which first involved these kingdoms in confusion, and at last in ruin. The family of Cerdic, the founder of the West-Saxon kingdom (from whom our present most gracious sovereign George III. is descended), was more fortunate than any of the other royal families. For though the strictest rule of succession was often violated in this illustrious line (sometimes through necessity and for the public good) (83); yet the family was never quite excluded from the throne, but was at length exalted to the monarchy of England in the person of Egbert, the first English monarch.

Hereditary after the establishment of the monarchy.

After the establishment of the monarchy, the strictest rule of succession again took place, and was for some time observed; but in less than a century, it was again violated by Alfred, the best and greatest of our ancient kings, who was called to the throne by the urgent necessities of the times, and the importunate cries of the whole nation, to the exclusion of the infant-son of his elder brother. Several similar breaches were afterwards made in the succession, to say nothing of the violent intrusion of the Danish kings, and the usurpation of Harold. Upon the whole, there is sufficient evidence, that the crown of England was considered as hereditary from the very beginning by the Anglo-Saxons; though the strictest rule of hereditary succession was sometimes obliged to yield to necessity, and sometimes to violence. In these deviations the testament of the last king was sometimes of no little weight; and the approbation of the great men in the wittenagemot was always necessary to their stability.

Rules of succession to the crown among the Scots and Welsh.

The same observations may be applied to the succession of the crown among the Scots in this period; though

(83) W. Malmf. l. 1. c. 2. Prompt. p. 770. Chron. Sax. n. p. 56.

the

the deviations from the strict rule of hereditary succession seem to have been rather more frequent among them than among the English. Kenneth II. who mounted the throne of Scotland A. D. 970, is said to have made a law to prevent these deviations, and to secure the crown to the eldest son of the last king (84). But if such a law was made, it is evident from the history of the succeeding period, that it had little or no effect. The unhappy custom that prevailed among the Welsh, of dividing the territories of the father among all his sons, threw every thing with regard to the succession of their princes into great confusion, and was attended with many other fatal consequences.

The duties of a sovereign, in the times we are now considering, were chiefly two:—To administer justice to his subjects, with the assistance of his court or council, in times of peace,—and to command the armies of the state in times of war.

Duties of  
the Anglo-  
Saxon  
kings.

That our Anglo-Saxon kings were considered as the chief judges in their respective kingdoms, and frequently administered justice in person, is undeniable (85). To this they were bound by their coronation oath; and in this some of them spent a great proportion of their time. Alfred the Great, in particular, as we are assured by Asserius, who lived in his court, sometimes employed both day and night in hearing causes that were brought before him by appeals from the sentences of inferior judges (86). These sentences he frequently reversed, reprimanding the judges for their ignorance, and commanding them, either to apply to the study of the laws, or resign their offices (87). When their wrong judgments proceeded from malice or corruption, he punished them with great severity, and, if we may believe the author quoted below (88), condemned no fewer than forty-two judges in one year to capital punishments. To assist our ancient kings in performing this part of their royal office, they were constantly attended by a considerable number of the greatest and wisest men of the kingdom, who acted as assessors to their sovereign, and formed a supreme court of justice, which was called

To admin-  
ister jus-  
tice.

(84) Boet. Hist. Scot. l. 2.

(85) Hickesii Dissertatio epistolaria, p. 115.

(86) Asser. Vita Ælfredi, p. 21.

(87) Id. ibid.

(88) Miroir de Justices, l. 5.

the *king's court* or *council* (89). To render the attendance of the members of this supreme council more easy and compatible with the management of their private affairs, Alfred the Great divided them into three equal parts, which succeeded each other monthly (90).

This part of the royal office performed by a deputy.

This part of the royal office was found to be very inconvenient after the establishment of the monarchy, when appeals to the sovereign from all parts of England became very frequent, and when few of our kings had sufficient knowledge and industry to perform it in person. Several laws were made to prevent unnecessary appeals to the sovereign; and a chief justiciary was appointed to preside in the king's court, and perform the judicial part of the royal office, when the king was absent, or otherwise employed (91). It is impossible to discover the precise time when this high office of chief justiciary was instituted; though it is most probable, that it was some time in the tenth century, when our kings were so constantly engaged in war against the Danes, that they had no leisure to attend in person the administration of justice. At its first institution, the persons invested with it seem to have been called by different names, expressive of their high dignity and great authority, as *half-king*, *alderman of all England*, &c. Æthelstan, a great and powerful thane in the reign of king Athelstan, was raised to this high office (and was perhaps the first who enjoyed it), with the title of *half-king*; because he performed that half of the regal office which consisted in the administration of justice. His son Aylwin succeeded him; but contented himself with the more modest title of *alderman of all England* (92). After the institution of this office, which continued for several centuries to be the highest in the state, our kings gradually withdrew from the bench, and left the administration of justice to their high justiciaries and other judges.

Commanded the army in time of war.

The other part of the regal office, which consisted in commanding the armies of the state in person in time of war, was long considered as indispensable. It was by being brave and successful generals, that the founders

(89) See Squire's Inquiry into the English Constitution, p. 181.

(90) Allen. Vita &c. 11131, p. 19, 20.

(91) Wilkins Leges Sax. p. 77. 250. Spelman Gloss. in voce Justiciarius

(92) Selden's Tit. Hon. p. 505. Hist. Ramfien. c. 3.



of the several states of the heptarchy had become kings; and it was long believed to be improper, if not impossible, for any one to be a king who was not a warrior. Many who by blood were well entitled to reign, were excluded from the throne, because, on account of their age or sex, they were esteemed incapable of performing this most essential part of the regal office. Some of our ancient kings, however, after they were firmly seated on the throne, were discovered to be of an unwarlike character, and naturally incapable of commanding armies in person; and were therefore permitted to perform to this part of the regal office also by a substitute, who was called the *cyning's hold*, or *king's lieutenant*, and had the same authority over all the other holds or heretoges of the several counties, that the high justiciary had over all the other aldermen (93).

Nothing can be more evident than this important truth,—“ That our Anglo-Saxon kings were not absolute monarchs; but that their powers and prerogatives were limited by the laws and customs of their country.” Our Saxon ancestors had been governed by limited monarchs in their native seats on the continent; and there is not the least appearance or probability, that they relinquished their liberties, and submitted to absolute government in their new settlements in this island (94). It is not to be imagined, that men, whose reigning passion was the love of liberty, would willingly resign it; and their new sovereigns, who had been their fellow-foldiers, had certainly no power to compel them to such a resignation. The power of administering justice to their subjects, and of commanding the armies of the state, which have been represented above as the most important duties of our Anglo-Saxon kings, may be also considered as their chief prerogatives. Those princes who performed these two offices in their own persons, with great abilities and success, had the greatest influence and authority; while those who wanted either capacity or industry for the execution of these offices, were much despised and disregarded.

None of our Saxon kings ever so much as pretended to the power of making laws, or imposing taxes, without the advice and consent of their wittenagemots, or

Prerogatives of the Anglo-Saxon kings.

Had not power to make laws, or impose taxes.

(93) Squire on the English Constitution, p. 213. n.

(94) Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 7.

assemblies of the great and wise men of their respective kingdoms. This is evident from the preambles to the several systems of Saxon laws which are still extant (95).

Assembled  
the witten-  
agemots

It seems to have been the prerogative of our Saxon kings to call the wittenagemots, or great councils,—to appoint the times and places of their meeting,—to preside in them in person,—to propose the subjects of their deliberations,—and to execute their decrees (96.)

Had not  
the sole  
power of  
peace and  
war.

When the kingdom was suddenly invaded by a foreign enemy, or its internal peace disturbed by an insurrection, the king might by his own authority put himself at the head of his troops, to repel the invaders, or suppress the insurgents: but when a formal war against a neighbouring state was intended, more deliberation was required; and it could not be undertaken without the advice and consent of the wittenagemot (97). The Anglo-Saxon kings had considerable influence in disposing of the conquered lands, and dividing the spoils taken from the enemy; but they were obliged to use this influence with justice and moderation, and could not keep above a third part of these lands and spoils to themselves, without incurring the indignation of their troops (98). King Harold, by retaining a greater proportion than this of the Danish and Norwegian spoils, occasioned so great a disgust and desertion in his army, that it proved the chief cause of his ruin (99). The consent of the wittenagemot was commonly obtained to the conclusion of peace, as well as to the declaration of war; because the prosperity and happiness of the whole kingdom were as much concerned in the one as in the other.

Had the  
power of  
military  
discipline.

Among the ancient Germans, the king had no power to inflict any punishment upon his soldiers for desertion, or other offences, this being the province of their priests, who acted by the authority of the god of war, who was supposed to be present in their armies (100). But after the introduction of Christianity, the exercise of military discipline became one of the royal prerogatives, as it was never claimed by the Christian clergy (101).

(95) Vide *Wilkins Leges Saxon.* passim.

(96) *Spiel. Gloss.* in voce *Gemectum*.

(97) *Craver. German. Antiq.* p. 308.

(98) *Squire on the English Constitution*, p. 205. *Leges Wallicæ.* p. 22.

(99) *W. Malmut.* p. 94. *Hagden.* p. 253.

(100) *Tacit. de Morib. German.* c. 7.

(101) *Wilkins Leges Saxon.* p. 23.

The Anglo-Saxon kings had no power of remitting any mulct or fine imposed upon any criminal by a court of justice, because that would have been depriving another person of his right; but they had a power of changing a capital into a pecuniary punishment (102).

The power of pardoning.

The kings of England, in the period we are now considering, were only usufructuaries of the crown-lands, and could not alienate any of these lands, even to the church, without the consent of the wittenagemot (103).

Could not alienate the crown-lands.

It appears to have been one of the royal prerogatives in the times of the heptarchy, and even after the establishment of the monarchy, to appoint the aldermen, shiregerieves, domesmen, and other civil and military officers; but this power seems to have been afterwards taken from the crown, and vested in the wittenagemot (104). But the time and other circumstances of this change in the constitution, are not preserved in history; and it must also be acknowledged, that the pretended laws of Edward the Confessor, which inform us of it, are of very doubtful authority, and can hardly be depended upon.

Nomination of magistrates.

The veneration for the clergy, after the introduction of Christianity, was so very great, that our kings seem to have left to them the government of the church, in a great measure, and the choice of persons to ecclesiastical offices, for some ages. It is expressly declared by the laws of Withred king of Kent, A. D. 694, that the archbishop of Canterbury had as good a right to nominate bishops, abbots, abbesses, &c. as the king had to nominate the civil and military officers of the kingdom (105). This law was adopted and confirmed by Ethelbald king of Mercia, A. D. 742, in a great council of the clergy and nobility, and by his successor king Offa, A. D. 785; and seems to have been observed in all the kingdoms of the heptarchy (106). By degrees, however, our Anglo-Saxon kings found it necessary for the peace and good government of the state, to interfere more directly in ecclesiastical elections, and to take

Ecclesiastical authority of the Anglo-Saxon kings.

(102) Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 36. 201.

(103) Squire on the English Constitution, p. 219. Spel. Concil. t. i. p. 340.

(104) Chron. Saxon. p. 49. Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 205.

(105) Chron. Saxon. p. 49. Spel. Concil. t. i. p. 190.

(106) Spel. Concil. t. i. p. 230. 292.

care that the dignities of the church should be filled by men of peaceable dispositions, and well affected to their persons and government. They were so successful in their endeavours to obtain the direction of ecclesiastical elections, that they acquired, first the right of approving, and at length of appointing, all the chief dignitaries of the church (107).

Did not  
bestow  
nominal  
titles.

As hereditary titles of honour, unconnected with offices, were unknown in the period we are now delineating, our Anglo-Saxon kings could not have the prerogative of granting such titles.

Coining  
money.

The authority of regulating the public coin of the kingdom seems to have been vested in the wittenagemot; and the privilege of coining was not only granted to the king, but also to the archbishops, bishops, and chief towns (108). It is unnecessary to be more particular in pointing out the prerogatives of our Anglo-Saxon kings, as it is sufficiently evident from the above account, that they were circumscribed within very narrow limits, and were hardly sufficient to support the dignity of the crown, unless when it was worn by a person of a warlike character and great abilities.

Revenues  
of the  
Anglo-  
Saxon  
kings.

The revenues of the Anglo-Saxon kings, especially in the times of the heptarchy, could not be very great, and consisted chiefly in the profits arising from the crown-lands, and their own patrimonial estates. As the Saxons met with a more vigorous resistance in Britain than any of the other northern nations who founded kingdoms on the ruins of the Roman empire in other countries; so they treated the native Britons with greater severity. All the other northern conquerors contented themselves with seizing two-thirds of the conquered country, which they divided among themselves, leaving the other third in the possession of the ancient inhabitants (109). But the Saxons seized the whole country, reducing all the ancient inhabitants who remained in it to a state of slavery, without leaving them even the property of their own persons. This country, with its wretched inhabitants, those greedy unrelenting conquerors divided among themselves, allotting to each chieftain an extent of territory, and number of slaves, proportioned to his

(107) Sp. l. Concil. p. 387. Ingulf. Hist. Croyl.

(108) Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 59.

(109) Lindenbrog. Leg. Antiq. p. 197.



dignity and the number of his followers. As these chieftains, and their martial followers, had acquired their title to their respective proportions of lands, slaves, and spoils, by the points of their swords; so they received them in free and full property, without being subjected to any payments to their sovereigns, or other magistrates, or even to any services, except those of fighting in defence of their country, and keeping the highways, bridges, and castles, in repair.

This made it necessary to assign a certain proportion of Crown-lands. lands, with their slaves, cattle, houses, &c. in every state, for the support of government, and of the dignity of those who were invested with it. In the division therefore of the conquered country, the chief commander of each army of adventurers received, in the first place, that proportion of lands, slaves, and spoils, that fell to his share as the leader of a particular tribe or family, which he held in free and full property, and might alienate at his pleasure, as well as any other chieftain. Besides this, when he was advanced to the throne, he was put in possession of those lands, &c. which had been allotted for the support of the royal dignity; but of these he was only the usufructuary, and not the proprietor; they belonged to the crown, and not to the king, who could not alienate them without the consent of the national assembly or wittenagemot. What proportion the crown-lands originally bore to those of the nation in each state, or whether there was any such proportion settled or not, we are entirely ignorant; though it is highly probable, on many accounts, that these lands were very considerable in extent and value. Out of the produce of their crown-lands and family-estates, which were cultivated, partly by slaves, and partly by serfs, those ancient monarchs supported their families and numerous retainers in rude magnificence and plenty,

As the administration of justice was one of the principal offices and most important prerogatives of our Fines and amercements. Anglo-Saxon kings, so it was also one of the greatest sources of their wealth. By law, a very great proportion (in some cases one-half, and in others one-third) of all the fines and mulcts imposed on criminals by the courts of justice belonged to the king (110). This, at

a time when almost all punishments were pecuniary, must have amounted to a very considerable sum. We shall have occasion, by and by, to take notice, that our ancient kings derived considerable profits both from foreign and domestic trade (111).

**Danegeld.** When the invasions of the Danes became frequent and formidable, it became a custom sometimes to bribe them with a sum of money to desist from their depredations, and leave the country, and at other times to keep a considerable body of troops in constant pay, to defend the coasts against these dangerous enemies. The ordinary revenues of the crown were quite inadequate to the expence of these expedients; and therefore it was found necessary, with the consent of the wittenagemot, to impose a tax, first of one Saxon shilling, and afterwards of two or more shillings, on every hide of land in the kingdom. As there were two hundred and forty-three thousand six hundred hides of land in England, this tax, at one shilling on each hide, raised twelve thousand one hundred and eighty Saxon pounds, equal in quantity of silver to about thirty-six thousand five hundred and forty pounds sterling, and in efficacy to more than three hundred and sixty thousand pounds of our money at present. This tax seems to have been first imposed A. D. 991, and was called Danegeld, or the Danish tax or payment (112). It was soon after raised to two, and at last to seven shillings, on every hide of land, and continued to be levied long after the original occasion of imposing it had ceased. While the invasions of the Danes were almost annual, our kings derived little profit from this tax, which was all expended in bribing or fighting these invaders; but after the accession of the Danish princes to the throne of England, it became one of the chief branches of the royal revenue. This tax was raised so high, and collected with so much severity, by king Canute, A. D. 1018, that it amounted to the prodigious sum of seventy-one thousand Saxon pounds, besides eleven thousand of the same pounds paid by the city of London (113). It appears, however, from very good authority, that this was too great a sum for England to pay in one year at that time. “The tribute (says an

(111) Chap. 6.  
(113) *Id.* p. 151.

(112) Chron. Saxon. p. 126.

“ author of those times, preserved by Mr. Leland) that  
 “ was paid annually by the English to the Danes, was  
 “ at length raised to seventy-two thousand pounds and  
 “ more, besides eleven thousand paid by the city of  
 “ London. Those who had money to pay their propor-  
 “ tion of this grievous tax, paid it; but those who had  
 “ not money, irrecoverably lost their lands and posses-  
 “ sions. The church of Peterborough, and several  
 “ other churches, sustained great losses on that occa-  
 “ sion (114).” From these accounts it is evident, that  
 this tax had been gradually raised from one shilling to  
 seven shillings on each hide of land. It was afterwards  
 reduced to four shillings on each hide; at which rate it  
 seems to have continued till it was finally abolished about  
 seventy years after the Norman conquest. Houses in  
 towns were subjected to this tax; and a house of a cer-  
 tain value paid the same with a hide of land (115).

Our Anglo-Saxon and Danish kings derived consider-  
 able profits from forfeitures,—from vacant benefices,—  
 from the hercots of their aldermen and thanes, and from  
 some other sources with which we are not particularly  
 acquainted; which enabled them to live with sufficient  
 splendour,—to reward their friends,—to encourage  
 learning,—to relieve the poor,—to build monasteries,  
 churches, and other edifices, for the benefit and orna-  
 ment of their country (116).

Forfeit-  
ures, &c.

As the king was the highest magistrate, so the wit-  
 tenagemot was the highest court; in which, with the  
 king at its head, the sovereignty of the state resided, in  
 the period we are now examining. In the times of the  
 heptarchy, there were as many wittenagemots as there  
 were kingdoms; which, after the union of these king-  
 doms into one monarchy, were all united into one great  
 assembly, or mickle mot as it is often called.

The witten-  
agemot.

In this assembly, both ecclesiastical and political laws  
 were made; taxes for the maintenance of the clergy, and  
 the support of the civil government, were imposed; ques-  
 tions relating to peace and war were debated; civil and  
 criminal causes of the greatest moment were determined;  
 and the most important affairs of the kingdom were final-

Its powers.

(114) Leland's Collectanea, v. i. p. 11.

(115) Spelman Gloss. in voce Danigeldum. Doomsday-book,  
 apud Gale, t. i. p. 775.

(116) Allen. Vita Ælfridi.

ly regulated (117). All the power and wisdom of the state were presumed to be collected in the wittenagemot; which was therefore the guide and guardian of the kingdom, and took cognisance of every thing that affected its safety and prosperity; as the general assemblies of the several states had formerly done in Germany (118).

Its members in the most ancient times.

In that country, all the warriors of every little state, together with the priests, who were the only persons of any consideration, had a right to be present in these assemblies; and as these warriors never engaged in agriculture, trade, or manufactures, but spent their time in idleness, when they were not employed in some military expedition, their attendance on these assemblies was rather an amusement than an inconveniency. To such an assembly of warriors, the British ambassadors made their application for assistance; and such, we may believe, were the wittenagemots of the several little Anglo-Saxon states at their first establishment in this island; consisting of all the aldermen, heretoges, priests, and warriors of the state. In those times, when they were fighting their way, and their arms were hardly ever out of their hands, they attended the general assemblies of their nation in arms, as they had formerly done in Germany, ready to proceed upon any martial enterprize that might be resolved upon: but a change of circumstances naturally and unavoidably occasioned a change in the constitution of these assemblies, which probably took place by insensible degrees, and without any positive law.

In later times.

When the conquered lands were divided amongst all those brave warriors who had contributed to make the conquest, many of them who had been common soldiers, and consequently received but a small proportion of land, retired to their little farms, which they began to cultivate. These veterans, now become husbandmen, also farmed some parts of the lands of the thanes or heretoges, under whom they had fought; and by degrees formed a new order of men, unknown in ancient Germany, who were called *ceorls*, which have been already described (119). Some have imagined, that all these *ceorls*, who were descended from the original conquerors, and continued to be proprietors of land, had a title to be members of the witte-

(117) Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 11, 12. Tytrel's Introduction, p. 109, &c.

(118) Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 11.

(119) See p. 204  
nagemot;



nagemot; and there is sufficient evidence, that they were not excluded from it by any positive law, but only by their poverty and manner of life, which rendered their attendance highly inconvenient, if not impossible (120): for as soon as any of these ceorls acquired such an estate in land as enabled them to live with ease and dignity, and, attend the public councils of the nation, they were declared by an express law to be thanes and members of the wittenagemot (121).

The qualification in point of estate required by that law, was the property of five hides of land; and all the free-born English who were possessed of such an estate, with a church, a bell-house, and manor-place upon it, were considered as nobles, and had a title to be members of the wittenagemot. This qualification, it is imagined, was afterwards found to be too small, and was therefore gradually raised higher and higher, until, in the reign of Edward the Confessor, it was fixed at no less than forty hides of land (122). Qualification.

Besides all the considerable proprietors of land who could afford to attend the public councils of the nation, all the archbishops, bishops, abbots, presbyters, aldermen, heretoges, shiregerieves, and domestmen or judges, were, by virtue of their offices, and on account of their wisdom and knowledge of the laws, members of this great assembly; which, for this reason, was called the *wittenagemot*, or, *assembly of the wise men* (123). Other members:

Though great efforts have been made to prove, that the ceorls, or small proprietors of land, were represented in the wittenagemots by their tithing-men, or borsholders, and the inhabitants of trading towns by their aldermen or portreeves, it must be confessed, that of this there is not sufficient historical evidence remaining (124). The ceorls, rather interested spectators than members. It is however highly probable, that many ceorls and burghesses, who dwelt at or near the place where a wittenagemot was held, attended it as interested spectators, and intimated their satisfaction with its resolves, by shouts of applause, and other marks of approbation. On some few great occasions, when there was an uncommon con-

(120) Squire on the English Constitution, p. 167, &c.

(121) Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 70, 71.

(122) Historia Eliensis, c. 40.

(123) Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 14. 72, 76, 79, 102, &c. Spelman Gloss. in voce. Hist. Eliens. c. 10.

(124) Tyrrel's Introduction, p. 95, &c. Squire on the English Constitution, p. 244, &c.

course of such spectators, their presence and approbation is recorded in such terms as these:—"Omni-  
 "pulo audiente et vidente (and all the people hearing  
 "and looking on), aliorumque fidelium infinita multi-  
 "tudo, qui omnes laudaverunt, (and a prodigious  
 "crowd of other people, who all applauded) (125)."  
 As the real constituent members of the Anglo-Saxon wittenagemots were very many, and those who had a kind of right and interest to be spectators of their deliberations were still more numerous, they frequently assembled in the open air, in some extensive plain, on the banks of a river, and near a great town, for the benefit of water and provisions (126).

The king  
 proposed  
 the matter  
 to be de-  
 bated.

It was the prerogative of the king to appoint the time and place of the meetings of these great assemblies, and, with the advice of his council, to prepare and ripen those matters that were to be laid before them for their determination. This negative before debate, which was of great antiquity, being derived from the customs of the ancient Germans, was attended with the most important consequences, and gave the king and his council a very great influence in the wittenagemots (127). Such a regulation, however, seems to have been necessary in such numerous assemblies, which were certainly much fitter for determining what was proposed and explained to them, than for inventing and proposing.

Stated  
 times of  
 meeting.

In ancient Germany, the general assemblies of the several nations (of which the Anglo-Saxon wittenagemots were the genuine offspring) met at certain stated times, most commonly in the spring, at the full or change of the moon; and these times of meeting were well known to all who were obliged to attend them, who accordingly came to them without any particular summons (128). This custom seems to have prevailed among the Anglo-Saxons long after their settlement in Britain; and the stated times for these meetings, as long as they continued Pagans, were no doubt the same that had been observed by their ancestors on the continent. But after

(125) Spelman. Concil. p. 62c. 350.

(126) For the names of the places where the wittenagemots met, see Hadd's History of Conventions.

(127) Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 11. (128) Id. ibid.

their conversion to Christianity, the ordinary stated meetings of the wittenagemots appear to have been at the three great festivals of Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide, wherever the court happened to be at these times. On these festivals, the Anglo-Saxon kings of England lived in great state, wore their crowns, and were surrounded by all the great men of their kingdoms, who were sumptuously entertained by them, and with whom they consulted about the important affairs of church and state (129).

We have good reason to believe, that these ordinary meetings, on account of their frequency, and other circumstances, could not be very numerous, and were attended by few besides those great men who were members of the king's court or council, and were admitted to the royal table; who, we may therefore presume, acted rather in their ministerial and judicial, than in their legislative capacity, on these occasions. But when any thing was to be done that required the united wisdom and authority of the whole kingdom, as the making new laws,—imposing taxes,—declaring war, &c. an extraordinary, or rather a more solemn meeting of the wittenagemot, was called, to which all who had a right to be present were summoned. The laws of king Edmund indeed are said to have been made in a mickle synod, or wittenagemot, held at London A. D. 944, on the holy feast of Easter; but it appears from the preamble to these laws, that this was one of those more solemn meetings to which all the members had been summoned (130). The wittenagemots mentioned by our historians seem to have been, for the most part, of this more solemn kind, called for some particular and important purpose; which is probably the reason that several years sometimes elapse between these meetings, though there might be many such meetings in those remote ages, of which we have no records (131).

The members of the wittenagemots enjoyed several privileges, and special laws were made for securing the liberty and safety of their persons, in going to, attending

Extraordinary meetings.

Privileges of the members.

(129) Spelman. Concil. p. 347. n. Hody's Hist. of Convocations, p. 58.

(130) Spelman. Concil. p. 419.

(131) For the dates of the Anglo-Saxon wittenagemots, see Hody's Hist. of Convocations.

at, and returning from those assemblies; but such of them as were notorious thieves were not entitled to the benefit of those laws (132). This exception may appear surprising; but it was not unnecessary: for in those times, too many, who by their rank and wealth were entitled to be members of the supreme council of the nation, were notorious thieves and robbers; and one of the best of our Anglo-Saxon kings lost his life in extruding one of this character from his own table (133).

General  
observa-  
tion.

From the foregoing brief delineation of this part of the Anglo-Saxon constitution, respecting their magistrates, and courts of law and justice, gradually ascending from the boroughholder to the king, and from the court of the decennary to the wittenagemot, it evidently appears to have been a more regular and solid fabric than could have been expected from such unskilful artists. But it was the work of many nations, and of many ages, and arose, by slow degrees, and various means, to that beauty and firmness which we cannot but admire. It would not be impossible to trace the progress of this political edifice from the first rude plan that was formed of it in the wilds of Germany and Scandinavia, to its most perfect state: but such a laborious investigation could afford entertainment only to those few who need it least. The changes which have been made in it since the Norman conquest, will appear in their several periods in our subsequent chapters on government.

Constitu-  
tion of  
Scotland in  
this period.

As that part of Scotland which lies to the south of the friths of Forth and Clyde, especially on the eastern coasts, belonged to the kingdom of Bernicia for several ages, and was chiefly inhabited by Saxons, we may be certain, that its government was the same with that above described. When this country was finally conquered by, or rather ceded to the Scots, about a century before the Norman conquest, it only changed its sovereign; but neither changed its government nor its inhabitants (134). Pleased with this valuable acquisition, the kings of Scotland frequently resided in the low countries, and by degrees became acquainted with the Saxon language, laws, and manners; which they at last adopted, and endeavoured to introduce into other parts of their dominions.

(132) William de Willelmus Saxon. p. 146.

(133) M. M. de L. 1. 2. c. 7.

(134) Luce's History, vol. 2. Append.



These, however, made but little progress, in this period we are now considering, in the northern provinces of Scotland, inhabited by the posterity of the ancient Caledonians, who still retained their ancient laws and customs; which have been described in the first volume of this work. The taniist, or appointed successor to the crown, was next in power and dignity to the king; the toshock was the chief commander of the army; while the tiernas, or chieftains (by our historians improperly called *thanes*), of the several tribes, with the assistance of their brehons, or inferior judges, administered justice in their several districts (135). All important affairs of general concern were determined in assemblies composed of the great men of the nation. But it is unnecessary to be more particular in describing the ancient constitution of Scotland, before the introduction of the feudal form of government in the reign of Malcolm III. as hardly any authentic memoirs or undoubted vestiges of that constitution are now remaining (136). It was probably the same with that which was established among the other genuine descendants of the ancient Britons in Ireland and Wales.

That deplorable anarchy in which the provincial Britons were involved after the departure of the Romans, made them an easy prey to the Scots and Picts, and prevented their making an effectual opposition to the Saxons (137). Even after they had lost the best part of their country, and were confined to the mountains of Wales and Cornwall, their government continued for some time very fluctuating and irregular. This is acknowledged by one of their best antiquaries; who observes, that in the end of the eighth century, "there was as yet no stayed government established in Wales; but such as were chief lords in any country were called kings (138)." Their animosity against the Saxons was for some ages so violent, that they would comply with none of their customs, either in civil or religious matters. But when this animosity began to wear off, the great imperfection of their own form of government made them so ready to adopt the political regulations of

(135) Dr. Macpherson's Dissertations, Dissert. 13.

(136) See Lord Kames's British Antiquities, essay 1.

(137) Gildæ Hist. c. 19. (138) Powell's Hist. Wales, p. 20.

their ancient enemies, that before the middle of the tenth century, the constitution, magistrates, and courts of Wales, were almost exactly the same with those of England (139). This is so true, that a more minute and particular account of the Anglo-Saxon constitution might be extracted from the Welsh laws of Howel Dha, which were collected A. D. 842, than even from the Saxon laws themselves.

Great of-  
ficers of the  
court.

It will at once be a sufficient proof of this, and a proper conclusion of this section, to give a brief account (chiefly taken from these laws) of the great officers of the court and household of the kings of Wales, which were the same with those of the kings of England, and of all the other sovereigns of Europe in this period, as to the duties of their respective offices, though their emoluments were not so great as in more wealthy states.

The great officers in the court of the kings of Wales were twenty-four in number; of which sixteen belonged to the king, and eight to the queen (140). Their rank, duties, privileges, and emoluments, were as follows:

Mayor of  
the palace.

1. The *penteulu*, or mayor of the palace, was the highest officer in the court of the kings of Wales, and was always a prince of the royal family. He took place of all the other officers of the household, and had the chief direction of every thing within the verge of the court. On the three great festivals, he had a sumptuous table in the lower part of the hall where the king dined; and when any person had behaved improperly at the royal table in the upper part of the hall, and was extruded from thence, it was the duty of the mayor of the palace to invite the offender to his table, and to intercede with the king in his favour. A strange mixture of rudeness and humanity! This great officer was general of the army, and appointed those parties of the king's forces that were sent out from time to time to plunder the English borders, and sometimes commanded them in person. His salary was no more than three pounds a year; but he had a great variety of valuable perquisites, besides several honourable privileges; one of which was, that in the absence of the king all the officers of the court were obliged to attend him, as if he had been the

(139) Vide Prefat. ad leges Howeli Dha.

(140) Lege Walllice, p. 8.

king, and the court musician to sing as many songs to him as he desired (141).

2. The *priest of the household* was the next in dignity, and always sat at the royal table, to bless the meat, and chant the Lord's prayer. His perquisites were so many, that it was certainly one of the most lucrative offices in the court (142). The priest of the household.

3. The *disdain* or steward of the household was the third in rank. It was the duty of this officer to procure all kinds of provisions for the king's kitchen, and liquors for his cellar, and to command all the servants belonging to both,—to assign every one of the guests his proper place at the royal table,—to set one dish upon it at the head, and another at the foot,—and to taste all the liquors before they were presented. The emoluments of this office (besides an estate in land, free from all taxes, annexed to it, as to each of the other offices) consisted in a variety of perquisites, of which the following was one of the most remarkable. "As much of every cask of plain ale shall belong to the steward of the household as he can reach with his middle finger dipped into it, and as much of every cask of ale with spices as he can reach with the second joint of his middle finger, and as much of every cask of mead as he can reach with the first joint of the same finger (143)." Steward.

4. The *penhebegydd*, or master of the hawks, was the fourth officer in rank and dignity, and sat in the fourth place from the king at the royal table; but was permitted to drink no more than three times, that he might not be intoxicated, and neglect his birds. He had the care and management of all the king's hawks, and the direction of all the people employed in the royal sport of hawking. When he had been at any time remarkably successful in his sport, the king was obliged, by law and custom, to pay him the most distinguishing honours, to rise up to receive him when he entered the hall, and even, on some occasions, to hold his stirrup when he alighted from his horse. The emoluments of this office were not inconsiderable (144). Master of the hawks.

5. The *judge of the household* possessed the fifth place of rank and dignity, and had a seat at the royal table. The Judge of the household.

(141) Leges Wallice, p. 15—18. Muratori.

(142) Leges Wall. p. 18, 19.

(143) Id. p. 25—23.

(144) Id. Ibid.

most indispensable qualifications of this great officer were these two, a learned education, and a long beard. He was sworn into his office with very great solemnity, and invested with it, by the king's giving him a chess-board of curious workmanship, the queen presenting him with one gold ring, and the poet of the court with another; all which he was obliged to keep with great care as long as he lived. The judge of the household determined all disputes that arose among the officers and servants of the king's household, tried the qualifications of those who were candidates for being judges in the country, and presided in those famous contests of the poets and musicians that were frequently held before the king; for all which he was entitled to a variety of perquisites; which made his office as lucrative as it was honourable (145).

Master of  
the horse.

6. The *penguafdravd*, or master of the horse, was the sixth officer in rank, and the last who had a place at the royal table. He had the superintendency of the king's stables and horses, and of all the officers and servants employed about them; for which he had many perquisites (146). This officer seems to have been the same with the *stal-here*, or master of the stables, of our Anglo-Saxon kings (147).

Chamber-  
lain.

7. The *givas ysfafell*, or chamberlain, was the seventh officer in rank: and though he had no place assigned him in the great hall, he had the honour to sleep in the king's chamber, of which he had the care. This officer had the command of all the servants employed about the chambers of the king, queen, and royal family. It was his duty to provide clean straw, or rushes, for the beds, to see them properly made, and fires put on, &c. He was also treasurer of the chamber, and had the keeping of the king's cups, drinking-horns, rings, and other valuable effects, for which he was accountable.

Chief mu-  
sician.

8. The bard or chief musician of the court was the eighth in dignity, and had a seat next to the mayor of the palace, at his table, in the lower part of the hall. When he was invested with his office, the king presented him with a harp, and the queen with a gold ring; both which he was obliged to keep as long as he lived. It was his duty to sing and play before the king, 1. the praises of God, 2. the praises of the king, and, 3. a song on

(145) Leges Wal. p. 26—31.

(146) Id. p. 31.

(147) Cam. Britan. p. 261.



some other subject. He was also to sing and play before the queen, in her own apartment, as often as she required him, but in a low tone, that he might not disturb the king and his company in the hall. He likewise attended the army, and before an engagement sung and played a particular song, called *Unbennusacht Prydain*, i. e. the British empire; for which he was rewarded with a share of the booty (148).

9. The *gofdegwr*, or silentiary, possessed the ninth place. It was the duty of this officer to command silence in the hall when the king sat down to table; after which he took his stand near one of the great pillars; and when any improper noise arose, he immediately quashed it, by striking the pillar with his rod. This useful officer was not peculiar to the court of Wales, and doth not seem to be quite unnecessary in some great assemblies even in modern times (149). Silentiary.

10. The *peneynyd*, or master of the huntsmen, was the tenth in rank, and commanded the king's huntsmen, hounds, and dogs of all kinds. From Christmas to the 1st of February, he was obliged to attend the court; but at other times his attendance was dispensed with, as he was engaged in the pursuit of his game. It was one of the privileges of this officer, that when he appeared in a court of justice, he was not obliged to take the usual oaths, but only to swear by his horn, and by his dogs (150). Master of the huntsmen.

11. The mead-maker was the eleventh, and had, as his name implies, the direction of making all the mead that was used in the king's household (151). The mead-maker.

12. The physician of the household was the twelfth, and had a seat at the table of the mayor of the palace, in the lower part of the hall. He was obliged by his office to cure all the slight wounds of the king's officers and servants, without any other fee, but such of their garments as were stained with blood, or cut with a weapon; but in more dangerous cases, as fractured skulls, or broken legs or arms, he was intitled to a fee of 180 pence, besides the bloody garments (152). The physician.

13. The *trulljad*, or butler, was the thirteenth, and had the custody of the king's cellars, and the care of Butler.

(148) Leges Wallicæ, p. 35—37.

(149) Id. p. 38. Du Cange Gloss. in voce Silentiarius.

(150) Leges Wallicæ, p. 39.

(151) Id. p. 43.

(152) Id. p. 44, 45.

giving out the liquors to all the members of the household, according to certain fixed proportions (153).

Porter.

14. The porter was the fourteenth, and was obliged to know the faces of all men who had a right to be admitted into the king's hall; and was severely fined, if he refused any of them admittance. He acted also as a gentleman-usher to the king. Among other perquisites, the porter was intitled to three horns-full of a certain liquor, which was called *the twelve apostles*, at each of the three great festivals (154).

Master-cook.

15. The master-cook was the fifteenth, and had the direction of the kitchen, and of the servants employed in it. This officer was obliged to superintend the dressing of all the dishes designed for the royal table, to taste them before they were served up, and to serve up the last with his own hand (155).

Master of the lights.

16. The master of the lights was the sixteenth; who had the care of all the wax and tallow candles used in the palace, was obliged to hold a taper in his hand near the dish out of which the king eat, and to carry one before him when he went into his bed-chamber (156).

Officers of the queen's household.

The eight officers of the queen's household were, the steward, the priest, the master of the horse, the chamberlain, the lady of the bed-chamber, the porter, the cook, and the master of the lights, whose duties need not be explained.

Fees and immunities of these officers.

To each of these twenty-four offices a certain estate in land was annexed, free from all taxes, in proportion to the dignity and importance of the office; and each of the officers who filled them had a horse maintained for him in the king's stables, a lodging assigned him in the palace; and those of them who had not a seat at the royal table, or at the table of the master of the palace, had either separate tables for themselves, or an allowance in money. The whole household was new-clothed at each of the three great festivals, by the king and queen, the king furnishing the woollen cloth, and the queen the linen. The lives of the officers of the household were valued at a much higher rate than those of others of the same rank;—any injury done to them was very severely punished;—and their daughters were considered as good matches, and bore a high price. These advanta-

(153) *Leges Wallicæ*, p. 45, 46.

(154) *Id.* p. 47, 48.

(155) *Id.* p. 49.

(156) *Id.* p. 50.

ges, and a great variety of perquisites, immunities, and distinctions, made those offices in the courts of our Anglo-Saxon and Welsh kings very desirable, and objects of great ambition.

Besides the twenty-four offices above described, there were eleven others, of considerable value, in the courts of these ancient princes; the most remarkable of which was that of the king's feet-bearer. This was a young gentleman, whose duty it was to sit on the floor, with his back towards the fire, and hold the king's feet in his bosom all the time he sat at table, to keep them warm and comfortable (157): a piece of state and luxury unknown in modern times! It is unnecessary, and would be tedious, to give a particular account of the other ten inferior offices.

### SECTION III.

*The history of law in Great Britain, from the arrival of the Saxons, A. D. 449, to the landing of William duke of Normandy, A. D. 1066.*

THE history of law, though it hath been much neglected, is certainly one of the most curious, useful, and interesting parts of history (1). To know the most important laws of any nation, in any period, together with the circumstances in which these laws were made, would enable us to form a sound judgment of the state and character of that nation, and of the wisdom, justice, and propriety of its laws. The want of this historical knowledge is apt to make us entertain very mistaken notions both of nations and of their laws. What, for example, can appear more absurd and barbarous than the following law of Ethelbert, the first Christian king of Kent? "If a freeman lie with a freeman's wife, let him buy another wife for the injured party (2)."

(157) *Leges Wallice*, p. 58.

(1) See Preface to Lord Kames's *Law-tracts*.

(2) Wilkins *Leges Saxon.* p. 4.

But when we learn from history, that a certain price was, in those times, set upon every woman according to her rank, and that no man could procure a wife without paying her legal price to her parents or guardians, we see that this law was perfectly just, and implied no more but that the adulterer should pay, by way of damages, to the injured party, the price which he had paid for his wife, who was now lost to him, to enable him to purchase another wife of the same rank.

Origin of  
written  
laws  
among the  
Anglo-  
Saxons,  
&c.

Our Anglo-Saxon ancestors, at their arrival in Britain, had no written laws, but were governed, as their ancestors had been for many ages, by certain well-known and established customs, which had the force of laws (3). This was the case with all the northern nations who invaded and subdued the several provinces of the Roman empire; they had no written laws when they left their native seats, but were governed by customs exactly similar to those of the Anglo-Saxons. All these nations, after they had formed establishments in Gaul, Spain, Italy, and Britain, became acquainted with letters, and put their ancient customs into writing, which were their first written laws (4). This is the true reason of the great similarity of the ancient laws of the Franks, Burgundians, Lombards, Wisigoths, and Anglo-Saxons (5). All these laws were transcripts of the same original customs, by which the ancestors of all these nations had been governed in the wilds of Germany and Scandinavia (6).

Different  
laws in  
England.

After these nations were firmly established in their new settlements, at a great distance from each other, their laws began by degrees to become a little different. But this difference, for several centuries, consisted chiefly in the various rates of those mulcts or fines that were exacted from those who were guilty of certain crimes, according to the greater plenty or scarcity of money in their respective countries. By the difference of these fines, the same crime might then have been committed in one country of Europe for half the money that it would have cost in another. This seems to have been the chief, if not the only difference between the three systems of laws that were established in England in this

(3) Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 19. (4) Id. c. 21.

(5) Vide Lindenbrog. Cod. Leg. Antiq. Wilkins Leg-s Saxon.

(6) Lindenbrog. Prolegomena.



period, viz. the West-Saxon law, the Mercian law, and the Dane law. For this at least we have the testimony of one of our most learned antiquaries; which can hardly be better expressed than in his own words: “ Our  
 “ Saxons, though divided into many kingdoms, yet  
 “ were they all one in effect, in manners, laws, and  
 “ language: so that the breaking of their government  
 “ into many kingdoms, or the reuniting of their king-  
 “ doms into a monarchy, wrought little or no change  
 “ among them, touching laws. For though we talk of  
 “ the West-Saxon law, the Mercian law, and the Dane  
 “ law, whereby the west parts of England, the middle  
 “ parts, and those of Suffolk, Norfolk, and the north,  
 “ were severally governed; yet held they all an uni-  
 “ formity in substance, differing rather in their mulcts  
 “ than in their canon; that is, in the quantity of fines  
 “ and amercements, than in the course and frame of  
 “ justice (7).”

It will not therefore be necessary to take any further notice of this distinction in our Anglo-Saxon laws, by which different mulcts were exacted of criminals, and different values were set on the lives and limbs of men, in the west, the middle, and the north parts of England, except it be to acquaint such readers as do not already know it, that similar distinctions obtained in the laws of all the other countries of Europe in this period; which occasioned the following singularity in the jurisprudence of the middle ages. When a person removed from one kingdom or province into another, he did not change his law, but his life and limbs continued to be valued at the same rate they had formerly been; and any injury that was done to him was compensated according to the laws of his native country, and not according to those of the country in which he resided (8). This gave those persons who removed from a rich country into a poor one, much greater, and those who removed from a poor country into a rich one, much less, security for their lives, limbs, and properties. The nose of a Spaniard, for example, was perfectly safe in England, because it was valued at thirteen marks; but the nose of an Englishman run a great risk in Spain, because it was valued only at twelve shillings. An Englishman might

Remark-  
able singu-  
larity in  
the juris-  
prudence  
of the  
middle  
ages.

(7) Reliquiæ Spelman. p. 49.

(8) Murat. Dissertazione, t. 1 p. 282.

have broken a Welshman's head for a mere trifle; but few Welshmen could afford to return the compliment (9).

The first  
written  
laws short,  
&c.

It is not to be imagined, that the first written systems of the ancient laws of the Anglo-Saxons, and other nations, who acquired the dominion of Europe in the fifth and sixth centuries, were very complete. The use of letters, in all these nations, was then in its infancy, and very few of the laity in any of them could either read or write. When they began therefore to put their laws in writing, they were frugal of their words, and put down, with great brevity, only some of the most capital points, leaving many others in their former state; which gave birth to that important distinction between the statute or written, and the common or unwritten law, which still subsists. This too is one of the chief causes of the great brevity, obscurity, and variations, observable in the most ancient codes of all the present nations of Europe; some particulars having been made statute law in one country, that were left in the state of common law in another. Whoever, therefore, would give a just account of the jurisprudence of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors, must be no stranger to the cotemporary laws of all the other nations of Europe, which are the best commentary on those of England in this period.

A com-  
plete sys-  
tem of  
laws not  
intended.

None of our readers will expect, or desire, a complete system of the statute and common law of England in the Anglo-Saxon times, with a full illustration of each particular, in this place. This is the province of the lawyer rather than of the historian, who must content himself with giving a view of the general spirit, and most important particulars, of the laws of his country in every period. For his further satisfaction, the reader will find in the Appendix, a translation of the laws of some of the best of our Anglo-Saxon kings (10).

Matrimo-  
nial laws.

The laws of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors, and of all the northern nations, relating to the matrimonial union of the sexes, were, in some respects, curious, and merit our attention. These laws are always of great importance to society; being very pernicious when they are imprudent or unnatural, and very beneficial when

(9) Wilkins *Leges Saxon.* p. 4, n. and p. 71.

(10) See *Append.* Number 3.

they are agreeable to nature and good policy. The great fundamental law, so clearly pointed out by nature, of the union of one man and one woman, was firmly established among all these nations in very ancient times; but the manner of forming this union, and the rights of the contracting parties, were a little singular. Though all these nations treated the sex with the most respectful attention, yet they considered every woman as under the protection or guardianship of some man or other during her whole life; without whose consent she could not execute any legal deed (11). Whether this was a proper testimony of their regard for the weaker sex, may be justly questioned; but the fact is undeniable. This protection, or guardianship, was called, in the Saxon language, *mund*; and the person who had a right to it, *mundbora*, who could not be deprived of this right without his own consent, obtained by a proper consideration (12). The father was the natural and legal guardian of his unmarried daughters;—the brothers, after the father's death, of their unmarried sisters;—the nearest male relation of those who had neither fathers nor brothers;—the male heir of the husband was the guardian of the widow;—and the king was the legal guardian and protector of all those women who had no other (13). When a young man therefore proposed to make his addressee to a lady, one of the first steps he took, was to procure the consent of her *mundbora* or guardian, by making him some present suitable to his rank and that of the lady. This present was called the *mede* or *price*, and, in the barbarous Latin of the middle ages, *metha* or *methum*; which gave occasion to its being said, that in those times men bought their wives (14). If any man was so rash as to marry a woman without the consent of her guardian, he not only incurred the severe penalties inflicted on those who were guilty of the crime of *mundbreach*, as it was called, but he obtained no legal authority over his wife, or any of her goods, by such a marriage; that authority still remaining in the guardian, who could not be divested of it without his own consent. Nay, so far was this

(11) Muratori Antiq. t. 2. p. 113. Stiernhook de Jure Sueon. p. 153.

(12) Spelman. Gloss. p. 423.

(13) Muratori Antiq. t. 2. p. 113, 114.

(14) Id. ibid. Du Cange Gloss. in voce.



idea carried, that if a woman who had been married without the consent of her guardian, was debauched, the damages recovered were not paid to her husband but to her guardian. To restrain avaricious guardians from demanding, and amorous youths from offering too great presents, for obtaining their consent, laws were made to limit the utmost extent of them, for people of all ranks (15). When a man made his addressee to a widow, he was obliged to pay no more than one-half of the limited price for the consent of her guardian, as a widow was estimated at no more than half the value of a maiden of the same rank (16). As soon as the lover had obtained the consent of his mistress, and of her guardian, the parties were solemnly contracted, and one of the bridegroom's friends became surety to the woman's guardian, that she should be treated well, and maintained in a manner suitable to her station (17). In this contract, the dowry which the husband settled upon his wife was fixed and ascertained; of which she was to enjoy the usufruct, and, in some cases, the property, if she proved the survivor. With respect to the proportion of this dowry, the laws of the Anglo-Saxons were more favourable to the sex than those of any other of the northern nations (18). It was a custom as inviolably observed as the most positive law, that all the friends and relations of both parties, within the third degree, were invited to the marriage-feast, and that all who were invited made a present of some kind or other to the bride and bridegroom (19). The father, brother, or guardian of the bride, in particular, made a considerable present in furniture, arms, cattle, and money, according to the circumstances of the family; which was called *faderfium* (*father-gift*), and was all the fortune the husband received with his wife (20). No marriage could be lawfully celebrated without the presence of the woman's guardian, who solemnized the marriage, by delivering the bride to the bridegroom with words to this purpose:

(15) Muratori Antiq. t. 2. p. 113, 114. Leges Wallicæ, p. 35.

(16) Leg. Longobard. l. 2. tit. 8. § 8.

(17) Spelman. Concil. p. 425.

(18) Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 18. Heineccii Op. t. 6. p. 113. Spel. Concil. p. 425. Stiernhook, p. 155. (19) Id. ibid.

(20) Heinecc. t. 6. p. 117. Lindenbrog. Gloss. in voce. Spel. Gloss. in voce.



“ I give thee my daughter (sister, or relation) to be thy honour and thy wife, to keep thy keys, and to share with thee in thy bed and goods. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.” After which, the priest pronounced the nuptial benediction (21). Though the bridegroom had already been at much expence in procuring the consent of the guardian, and settling a dowry on his wife, he was obliged, both by law and custom, to make her a valuable present on the first morning of their marriage, before he arose from bed, as a testimony of his entire satisfaction. This, which was called the *morgengifte*, or *morning-gift*, was the pin-money of antiquity, and became the separate property of the wife, with which the husband had no concern (22). It was found by experience, that some ladies, by their superior charms, or superior art, prevailed upon their husbands, in these critical circumstances, to make very extravagant morning-gifts; which produced positive laws in almost every country of Europe, restraining them within certain limits, in proportion to his estate (23). Such were the matrimonial laws and customs of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors; of which one great object seems to have been, to prevent unequal and clandestine marriages. They were evidently very favourable to the fair sex, and to those families who had many daughters; but whether any of them might be revived with advantage, it belongs not to a private person to determine.

When the matrimonial knot was once duly tied, among the ancient Germans, and the several nations descended from them, nothing but the death of one of the parties, or the infidelity of the wife to the marriage-bed, could dissolve it (24). After these nations had embraced the Christian religion, they were still further confirmed in these sentiments; and ties of marriage were esteemed very sacred and inviolable (25). It cannot however be denied, that voluntary separations, and even divorces, became gradually too frequent, especially amongst the great; and that the monkish doctrines con-

Concern-  
ing di-  
vorces.

(21) Stiernhook, p. 160.

(22) Wilkins Leges Sax. p. 144. Leges Wallicæ, p. 80. et in Gloss. voce Cowyll.

(23) Muratori, t. 2. p. 115.

(24) Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 19, 20.

(25) Spelman. Concil. p. 41. 52. 153.

cerning the great merit of vows of chastity made by married persons contributed not a little to this abuse. By the canon law, if either the husband or wife made a vow of chastity, the other party could not prevent a separation; and, which was still more unreasonable, could not marry another (26). The laws of Wales permitted a man to repudiate his wife not only for adultery, but for such indecent behaviour as indicated a disposition to commit that crime; and the same laws allowed a woman to separate from her husband, without forfeiting her dowry, for so slight a cause as an unfavourable breath (27).

Authority  
of hus-  
bands.

The husband, who had regularly purchased the guardianship of his wife from her former guardian, succeeded to all his rights, became her lord and protector, the administrator of her goods, and the guardian of all the children of the marriage (28). But though the authority of husbands, among all the northern nations who bought their wives, was very great; yet they seem to have exercised it with greater lenity than the Gauls, and other nations, who had not that custom; and for this very reason perhaps, that their wives had cost them money, and were considered as valuable possessions. By the laws of Wales (which were probably copied in this particular, as in many others, from those of their neighbours the English) a husband was allowed to give his wife three blows with a stick on any part of the body except the head, if he caught her in bed with another man—if she squandered away his goods—if she pulled him by the beard—or if she gave him opprobrious names; but if he beat her either more severely, or for more trifling causes, he was fined (29).

Paternal  
authority.

The paternal authority among the ancient Germans, and the nations descended from them, did not extend to the power of life and death, as amongst the Gauls; but parents in all these nations, had a right to correct their children with becoming severity, to regulate their conduct, to sell their daughters to husbands with their own consent, and even to sell both their sons and daughters into slavery, to relieve themselves from extreme necessity (30). In every clan or tribe of the Welsh in this

(26) Spelman. Concil. p. 269.

(27) *Leges Wallicæ*, p. 80. 298.

(28) *Leges Wallicæ*, p. 387.

(30) *Cæsar de Bell. Gal.* l. 6. c. 19. Heinec. t. 6. p. 61.

(28) Heinec. t. 6. p. 137.

period, there was one person who was styled the *pencenedl*, or *head of the tribe*, who had considerable authority over all the families in it, who transacted nothing of importance without his knowledge and consent (31). This officer, who was chosen by all the heads of families, was considered as the common parent of the whole tribe, the supreme judge in all genealogical questions about the admission of persons into the clanship, and was intitled to a present from every man who married any woman under his protection (32).

The laws of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors, for the regulation of bargains, compacts, and agreements of various kinds;—for the security of real and personal estates—for the recovery of just debts—for establishing mutual confidence and good faith among the members of society—and for pointing out the legal methods of obtaining justice in all these particulars, are too numerous to be here inserted, and would form a body of law rather than an article of history (33). Before the use of writing became common, all considerable bargains, compacts, and agreements of every kind, were transacted in the presence of some magistrate, or in the hundred or county court; that if any dispute arose concerning them, the most unexceptionable witnesses might not be wanting (34). Still further, to prevent mistakes about the terms and conditions of these transactions, they were sometimes written in the blank leaves of some church-bible, which was considered as an authentic record (35). The laws against insolvent debtors were very severe; and their creditors were permitted not only to strip them of every thing, and to imprison their persons, but even to reduce them to slavery (36). To inspire men with a regard to character in their dealings, notorious rogues and cheats were laid under many inconveniencies. They were not admitted into any decennary, nor suffered to bear testimony in any court of justice; and if they became very infamous, they had their noses cut off, or their heads scalped, that all men might know and avoid them (37).

The laws of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors not only provided for the security of men's properties during life, Laws of succession.

(31) *Leges Wallicæ*, p. 164.

(32) *Id.* p. 184.

(33) Vide *Wilkins Leges Saxon. passim. et Leges Wallicæ*.

(34) *Hicckesi Dissertatio Epistolaris*, p. 30.

(35) *Id.* p. 22, 23.

(36) *Heinec. t. 6. p. 15.*

(37) *Wilkins Leges Saxon.* p. 103, 137, 138.



but also directed and regulated the succession to them, and that in a manner very agreeable to the natural wishes and desires of mankind. When a father died and left children, they were his heirs, as being dearest unto him, and most dependent upon him (38). If these children were all sons, there can be no doubt that the possessions of their common parent were equally, or almost equally, divided amongst them; or if they were all daughters, the division was also equal: but when some of them were sons, and others daughters, it is not certainly known, whether the daughters shared equally with the sons or not, in the most ancient times. By the laws of the Saxons on the continent, daughters did not share equally with the sons; and this, it is probable, was also the law of those who settled in this island (39); though there is a law of king Canute which seems to make no distinction between sons and daughters (40). By the laws of Wales in the tenth century, a daughter received only half the proportion which a son inherited of their father's possessions (41). When a man at his death had no children, his nearest relations were his heirs; which are thus described: "If any one die without children, if his father  
 " and mother be alive, they shall be his heirs; if his  
 " father and mother are dead, his brothers and sisters  
 " shall be his heirs; but if he hath no brothers or sisters,  
 " the brothers and sisters of his father and mother  
 " shall be his heirs, and so on to the fifth degree, according  
 " cording to proximity of blood (42)." When none appeared to claim a succession, or when they could not make good their claim, the whole fell to the king. Such were the laws of succession among our Anglo-Saxon ancestors; different in several respects from those which are observed at present, and which were introduced, with many other feudal customs, after the Norman conquest.

Laws relating to testaments.

Though the above rules of succession seem to have been agreeable to the most natural feelings of the human heart, yet it might often happen, that persons who had no children, or very near relations, might wish to dispose

(38) Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 20.

(39) Lindenbrog. p. 476. (40) Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 144.

(41) Leges Walliæ. p. 88.

(42) Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 20. Lindenbrog. p. 460. Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 266.



of their possessions to others than those that were pointed out by law. But this the ancient Germans could not do, because they were strangers to the use of last wills or testaments, as the Anglo-Saxons probably were at their first settlement in this island (43). Those German and northern nations, however, who abandoned their native seats, and erected kingdoms in Italy, France, Spain, and Britain, soon became acquainted with, and adopted this method of conveying their estates, which they found practised by the Romans, and other inhabitants of these countries. After the conversion of these nations to Christianity, they were instructed and encouraged in this mode of eluding the strict laws of succession, and conveying their estates by will, for very obvious reasons. Accordingly we may observe, that the most ancient Anglo-Saxon testaments that have been preserved and published, are agreeable to the Roman forms, and contain very valuable legacies to the church, for the benefit of the souls of the testators, and of their ancestors (44). The method of disposing of their possessions by will, agreeable to their inclinations, and for the good of their souls, which was first adopted by kings and great men, soon became so common, and so fatal to the interests of legal heirs, that it was found necessary to lay it under some restraints by positive laws. By a law of Alfred the Great, all persons were restrained from alienating from their natural and legal heirs, estates which had descended to them from their ancestors, if the first purchasers had directed, either in writing, or before credible witnesses, that these estates should remain in the family, and descend to their posterity; which sufficiently proves, that entails are very far from being novelties in the laws of England (45). A man who had children was prohibited, by the laws of Wales, from leaving any legacies from his children, except a mortuary to the church, or a sum of money for the payment of his debts (46). But as the ignorance and superstition of the people, the influence and avarice of the clergy, increased, entails, and all other legal restraints, which had been contrived to prevent men from ruining their families to enrich the

(43) Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 20.

(44) Hicetii Dissertatio Epistolalis, p. 50—63.

(45) Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 43.

(46) Leges Wallicæ, p. 76.

church,

church, were removed, and every man was encouraged to leave as much to the church as possible. "The thirteenth cause (says Muratori) of the great riches of the church, was the pious manners of those ancient times, when fathers and councils earnestly exhorted all Christians to give, or at least to leave, by their testaments, a great proportion of their estates for the redemption of their souls; and those good men who complied with these exhortations, were said to have made Christ one of their heirs. By degrees, there was hardly any man died, without leaving a considerable legacy to the church; and if any person neglected to make a will, and do this, he was esteemed an impious wretch, who had no concern for the salvation of his soul, and his memory was infamous. To wipe off this infamy, it insensibly became a custom for the bishop to make wills for all who died intestate in his diocese, and to leave as much to the church as the persons themselves should have done, if they had made wills. This good office (as I imagine) was at first done with the consent, and perhaps at the request, of the heirs of the deceased; but in process of time it became an established custom, and acquired the force of a law, particularly in England (47)." Is it possible, that presumption on the one hand, and simplicity on the other, could be carried to a greater height?

Penal  
laws.

No laws, however just and prudent, have ever been found sufficient, in any country, to secure the peace and good order of society, and protect the properties, characters, and persons of men, from all injuries, merely by the force of their internal rectitude. Nor was there ever any nation in the world that could afford to bestow particular premiums upon all who obeyed its laws, in order to engage them to obedience by the hopes of these rewards. It became universally necessary, therefore, to enforce obedience, by the fear of punishments in case of disobedience; which gave rise in all parts of the world to those laws which are called criminal or penal laws, because they forbid crimes, and threaten penalties. The penal laws of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors were in several respects curious, and merit a short attention.

(47) Murator. Antiq. t. 5. p. 654.

In general, we may observe, that after the Anglo-Saxons embraced the Christian religion, they were subjected to double penaltiès for all their crimes; one of which was inflicted by the canons of the church, and the other by the laws of the state. Thus, for example, a person convicted of wilful murder was obliged, by the canons of the church, to live seven years on bread and water, as well as to pay all the penalties which the laws of the land required. But as the censures of the church are not so properly the subject of the present inquiry, it may be sufficient to refer the reader for an account of them to the books quoted below (48). It may be further observed, that as the great object of the Anglo-Saxon penal laws was to repair and make amends for injuries, rather than to punish crimes, they made little difference between injuries done through deliberate malice, and those done in a sudden transport of passion, or even by mere accident. It was a maxim in their law, as well as a proverb in common conversation, "Unwillingly offend, willingly amend (49)." This distinction, however, was too obvious and important to be quite disregarded; and therefore Canute the Great commands, in one of his laws, that some little difference should be made between a wilful and an accidental offender (50). From the same principle, capital punishments were very rare amongst the Anglo-Saxons; because a man's death could not repair the injuries which he had done by his crimes. Our more particular observations on the penal laws of this period must be chiefly confined to those which were designed to repair the injuries which men sustained in their properties by theft and robbery, in their characters by calumny, and in their persons by maiming and murder. The injury done, indeed, by this last crime, was irreparable to the person injured; and therefore the reparation was made to the king for the loss of his subject, and to the family for the loss of their friend.

Theft was one of the most common crimes in the period we are now considering; and therefore a great number of laws were made against those who were guilty of it. In the early part of this period, theft of the worst kind, even when it was committed in a church, in the

The spirit of the Anglo-Saxon penal laws was to repair the injury.

Laws against theft.

(48) Wilkins *Leges Saxon.* p. 89—93. *Spelman Concil.* p. 460—468. *Johnson's Canons*, A. D. 963.

(49) Wilkins *Leges Saxon.* p. 277. 279. (50) *Id.* p. 142.

king's

king's palace, or a bishop's house, did not expose the thief to any corporal punishment. But even then the compensation he was obliged by law to make rendered stealing a very losing trade when it was detected. By the laws of Ethelbert, the first Christian king of Kent, if a thief stole from a church, he was obliged to restore twelve-fold; from a bishop, eleven-fold; from the king, or from a priest, nine-fold; from a deacon, six-fold; and from other clerks, three-fold (51). Where, by the bye, we may observe how soon the goods of the church and of the bishop began to be esteemed more inviolable than those of the king. By degrees it was found necessary to make more severe laws against this crime, which continued to increase. By a law of Withred king of Kent, who flourished about a century after Ethelred, a thief who was caught in the act of stealing, might be killed with impunity, if he attempted either to fly, or to make resistance (52). Ina king of Wessex, who was cotemporary with Withred, proceeded a step further, and declared theft a capital crime; but allowed the thief, or his friends, to redeem his life, by paying his *were*, or the price at which his life was valued by the law, according to his rank in society (53). This seems to have continued to be the general principle of the Anglo-Saxon laws, with regard to those who were convicted of having stolen any thing of considerable value. This value was fixed by the laws of king Athelstan, A. D. 926, at eight pence, equal in efficacy to fifty shillings of our money at present; and it was not long after raised to twelve pence (54). The same king also raised the age at which a person might be condemned for theft, from twelve to fifteen years (55). All who had been once convicted of theft, and had paid their *were*, or price of their life, were obliged to find sureties for their good behaviour, or to swear, as the bishop directed them, that they would steal no more; and if, after this, they were convicted of the same crime, they were to be hanged (56). The accomplices and protectors of thieves, and those who received and concealed stolen goods, knowing them to be stolen, were subjected to the same penalties with the thieves themselves. The laws of

(51) Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 1, 2. See Append. No. 3.

(52) *Ibid.* p. 12.

(53) *Ibid.* p. 17.

(54) *Ibid.* p. 56. 65.

(55) *Ibid.* p. 70.

(56) *Ibid.* *ibid.*



Wales in this period, against theft, and indeed the laws of all the other nations of Europe seem to have been nearly the same with those of England (57). The distinction between the punishing of theft as a crime, and exacting compensation for it as an injury, which was the chief object of the penal laws of this period, is strongly marked in the following law of Howel Dha: "If a thief  
" is condemned to death, he shall not suffer in his  
" goods; for it is quite unreasonable both to exact com-  
" pensation, and inflict punishment (58)." But theft was at length made a capital crime, without benefit of compensation, about forty years after the Norman conquest (59).

Robbery, when it was committed by a troop of armed men, without the territories of the state to which they belonged, was so far from being condemned as a crime, that it was commended as a brave and patriotic action, by the ancient Germans, and the nations descended from them (60). All the laws of our Anglo-Saxon kings, in the times of the heptarchy, against robbery, were made with this restriction:—"Provided it was committed with-  
" in the bounds of our kingdom (61)." In the laws of Wales, there are many regulations for dividing the booty brought home by those bands of robbers that went out from time to time to plunder the territories of the neighbouring states; and of this booty the king, queen, and great officers of the court, had a considerable share (62). But though all those nations, to enrich themselves at the expence of their neighbours, and to keep their youth in the exercise of arms, encouraged external depredations, they discouraged internal robbery. By the laws of Ina king of Wessex, A. D. 693, a robber within the kingdom was condemned to restore what he had taken, and to pay a fine of sixty shillings; but if he was the leader of a gang of robbers above thirty-five in number, he was to pay the full price of his life, or his full *were*. By the laws of the same prince, a robber who broke into the king's or bishop's house was to make satisfaction with one hundred and twenty shillings; into an alderman's, with eighty shillings; into a thane's, with sixty shillings; and into the

Laws a-  
gainst rob-  
bery.

(57) Vide Leges Wallicæ, l. 3. c. 3. Heinec. t. 6. p. 442. 460.

(58) Leges Wallicæ, p. 221. (59) Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 304.

(60) Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 14.

(61) Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 16. (62) Leges Wallicæ, p. 17.

house of an inferior land-owner, with thirty-five shillings (63). These were certainly very moderate punishments for such audacious criminals; and yet this seems to have been the law during the whole of this period, except that the mulcts were raised a little higher by Canute the Great, in the beginning of the eleventh century (64). It is expressly declared in the ancient laws of Wales, that robbery shall never be punished with death; "because" (say these laws) it is a sufficient satisfaction for this "crime, if the goods taken be restored, and a fine paid "to the person from whom they were taken, according "to his station, for the violence offered him, and another to the king for the breach of the peace (65)." The extraordinary lenity of all those laws, is a further proof, that compensation, and not punishment, was their chief object. This is still more conspicuous in the laws against incendiaries, which obliged the unhappy man who had his house burnt by accident to pay all the damages done by the fire to the neighbouring houses, as much as if he had been a voluntary malicious incendiary (66): a most extravagant and unreasonable law! which shews how careful legislators ought to be, what general principles they adopt, and that they do not pursue them too far.

Laws against calumny.

A good name was never more useful and necessary than in the period we are now delineating; because, without that, no man could be admitted a member of any tithing or decennary, but was reputed a vagabond. It was probably for this reason that a calumniator was more severely punished by the laws of the Anglo-Saxons than a robber. By a law of Lothere, who was king of Kent towards the end of the seventh century, a calumniator was obliged to pay one shilling to the person in whose house or lands he uttered the calumny, six shillings to the person he calumniated, and twelve shillings to the king (67). But Edgar the Peaceable, who flourished about two centuries after, made a much more severe law against this crime; by which it was decreed, that a person convicted of gross and dangerous defamation should have his tongue cut out, unless he redeemed it, by paying his full *were*,

(63) Wilkins *Leges Saxon.* p. 16. 23. (64) *Id.* p. 143.

(65) *Leges Wallicæ*, p. 230.

(66) *Id.* p. 228.

(67) Wilkins *Leges Saxon.* p. 9.

(68) *Id.* p. 9. 78. 136.

or the price of his life; and this law was confirmed by Canute the Great (68).

To guard against personal injuries, to which a fierce and warlike people are exceeding prompt, many laws were made by the Anglo-Saxons for the preservation of the public peace, and the prevention of affrays and quarrels, in which men might be in danger of being killed or wounded. By a law of king Ina, it was declared, that whoever broke the peace in the king's court, or in a bishop's house, should pay a mulct of one hundred and twenty shillings; in an alderman's house, eighty shillings; in a thane's house, sixty shillings; in the house of an inferior landholder, thirty shillings (69). The penalty against this offence was very much raised by a law of Alfred the Great; which declared, that if any man fought, or even drew his sword, within the verge of the king's court, his life should be at the king's mercy; and if his life was spared, that he should pay his full *were* (70). The verge of the court extended three miles and a half every way from the house in which the king lodged (71). The penalties for the breach of the peace in cathedral churches were the same as in the king's court, viz. the loss of life, or the payment of a full *were*; in middling churches, a mulct of one hundred and twenty shillings; in smaller churches that have a burying-place, of sixty-shillings; in very small churches that have no burying-place, of thirty shillings (72). Several laws were also made, with pretty severe penalties, against fighting and quarrelling in ale-houses (73).

If a fierce unpolished people are too apt to offer personal injuries, they are still more apt to resent and revenge them with instantaneous and excessive violence. This made it necessary for the most ancient legislators of almost all nations to provide for the personal safety of criminals, and preserve them from the immediate revenge and fury of those whom they had offended. One means employed for this purpose by many nations, and particularly by our Anglo-Saxon ancestors, was the appointing certain places to be sanctuaries to all who took refuge in them; and giving authority to certain persons of the highest rank and greatest power, to defend all

Laws for the preservation of the peace.

Laws for the protection of criminals from sudden violence.

(68) Wilkins *Leges Saxon.* p. 9. 78. 136.

(70) *Id.* p. 36.

(71) *Id.* p. 63.

(69) *Id.* p. 22.

(72) *Id.* p. 126.

(73) *Id.* p. 9.



persons who put themselves under their protection from immediate violence. The king's court, and all churches, were declared sanctuaries by the Anglo-Saxon laws; and criminals who fled to them were protected from violence for a certain time, that they might have an opportunity of making satisfaction for the injuries which they had done, and of compromising matters with those whom they had offended (74). By the same laws, kings and bishops had authority to defend those criminals who put themselves under their protection, for nine days; and abbots and aldermen for three days; but if they did not make satisfaction within that time, they were then to be brought to justice, and punished according to law (75).

Punish-  
ments of  
personal  
injuries.

But as the laws that were made for preventing personal injuries were often ineffectual, it was necessary to make other laws, for regulating the punishment to be inflicted upon, or rather the satisfaction to be made by, those who were guilty of these injuries. Those laws were very numerous; but it will be sufficient to take notice only of a few of those which regulated the satisfaction to be made for the three great injuries,—of wounding,—of killing,—and of violating the chastity of the fair sex.

Wound-  
ing.

By the laws of the Anglo-Saxons, and of all the other nations of Europe, in the middle ages, certain prices were set upon all the members of the human body, and upon bruises, maims, and wounds, in every part of it, according to their breadth, length, and depth, with a degree of accuracy and minuteness that is truly surprising. These prices of the several parts of the body, and of their wounds, maims, and bruises, were formed into a kind of book of rates, which every judge was obliged to get by heart before he could be admitted to sit in judgment (76). When any person was convicted of having wounded another, the judge declared out of the doom-book, the price of a wound of such dimensions, in such a part of the body; and this the criminal was obliged to pay to the person wounded; and by a law of king Edmund it was declared, that no abatement could be made (77). The reader will find a copy of the most ancient of these doom-books in the laws of Ethelbert, the

(74) Wilkins *Leges Saxon.* p. 15. 35. 43.

(75) *Id.* p. 63.

(76) *Leges Wallicæ*, p. 186.

*Leges Saxon.* edit. a Wilkin.

p. 5, 6, 7.

(77) *Leges Saxon.* p. 74.



first Christian king of Kent, in the Appendix; and the most perfect one now extant is contained in the third book of the laws of Howel Dha (78). If a physician was called, the criminal was also obliged to pay for the medicines, and for the maintenance both of the doctor and the patient till the cure was completed (79). It is hardly necessary to observe, that this was a most unreasonable system of laws, and gave the rich a great advantage over the poor, which no doubt they frequently abused. But these laws were contrived to answer the great end of the jurisprudence of the middle ages, which was compensation, without promoting sufficiently the no less desirable end of prevention.

The laws of the Anglo-Saxons against killing or murder were still more unreasonable; because they attempted to make reparation for an injury which to the person who suffered it was irreparable. By these laws, a certain price or value was set upon every man's life, from the sovereign to the slave, according to his rank; and whoever killed any man was obliged to pay the price which the laws had set upon the life of a person of that rank. This price was called a man's *were* or *weregyld*, from *were* a man, and *gyldan* to yield or pay, and made a capital article in the doom-book; as may be seen in the laws of king Athelstan (80). These laws not only fixed the quantity of every man's *were*, but also directed to whom, and in what proportions, it should be paid. The king's *weregeld*, for example, was two hundred and forty pounds, equal in quantity of silver to about seven hundred and twenty pounds, and in real value to seven thousand two hundred pounds of our money; which was to be divided into equal parts, the one of which was to be paid to the family of the murdered prince, as a compensation for the loss of their relation, and the other was to be paid to the public, for the loss of their sovereign (81). The *were* of subjects of all ranks above slaves was paid, one half to the king, for the loss of his subject, and the breach of his peace, and the other half to the family of the murdered person, for the loss of their relation, and to extinguish their resentment

(78) See Append. No. 3. Leges Wallicæ, l. 3. c. 8. p. 275. to 279. (79) Id. p. 277. (80) See Append. No. 3.

(81) Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 72.

against the murderer; the former of which was called the *frith-bote*, from *frith* (peace) and *bote* (compensation), and the latter *mæg-bote*, from *mæg* (kindred) and *bote* (82). When a freeman killed his own slave, he had nothing to pay but a small mulct to the king for breach of the peace; but when he killed the slave of another person, besides this mulct to the king, he was obliged to pay the value of the slave to his owner, which was called *man-bote*, or *man's price* (83). If a slave killed a freeman, the owner of the slave was obliged to pay both the *frith-bote* to the king and the *mæg-bote* to the family of the murdered person, or to put the murderer into their hands. When a slave killed his own master, he was put to death; because, having no goods and no family, he could make no compensation: when he killed one of his fellow-slaves, his master might punish him as he pleased.

Change in  
the laws  
against  
murder.

As all the near relations of a murdered person received a share of his *mæg-bote*; so they contributed also their share to the payment of these mulcts for any of their relations who were guilty of murder; which greatly diminished the terror even of these penalties. King Edmund, who reigned from A. D. 940 to A. D. 946, being very desirous of giving some check to the frequent murders occasioned by the unreasonable lenity of these laws, particularly of the last, procured a law to be made, that from thenceforth the murderer himself should be the only object of the resentment of the injured family; and that his relations should not be obliged to pay any share of the penalties (84). But though this was an amendment, it was not sufficient to produce the desired effect; and therefore it was found necessary to depart from a maxim that had been too long established in the jurisprudence of the middle ages,—“That there was no crime that might not be expiated with money;” and to declare some crimes, and particularly some kinds of murder, inexpiable. By a law of king Ethelred, A. D. 1008, a murder committed within the walls of a church is declared to be inexpiable, without the special permission of the king; and when the king granted this permission (which was probably too often), the criminal was obliged to pay a mulct to the church for the violation of

(82) Spelman. Gloss. in voce *Fredum*. Semner and Leye's Dictionar. Saxon. voc. *frith-bote*, and *mæg-bote*.

(83) Du Cange Gloss. *Man bore*.

(84) Wilkins *Leges Saxon.* p. 73.

its protection, besides the frith-bote to the king and the mæg-bote to the family (85). Upon the whole, it is sufficiently evident, that the penal laws of the Anglo-Saxons against murder were the same in substance with those of their German ancestors; among whom murder was compensated by the payment of a certain number of catib; of which the whole family received a share (86). It is no less evident, that these laws were unreasonably gentle, and very ill calculated to prevent the commission of this horrid crime among a fierce people, who had arms continually in their hands.

As the fair sex are naturally weaker than men, and are exposed to injuries of a peculiar kind, so their persons and their honour have been protected in all civilized countries by particular laws. This is not the proper place to speak of those violations of chastity to which the woman was consenting; because, being equally guilty, she was equally punished with the other party. Only it may not be improper to observe, that the laws of the Anglo-Saxons, like those of their German ancestors, against adulteresses, were very severe (87). By an ordinance of king Canute, an adulteress, besides being declared infamous for life, and forfeiting all her goods, was condemned to have her nose and lips cut off, that she might no longer be an object of criminal desires (88). The English laws of this period inflicted certain pecuniary penalties on those who were guilty of any attempts against the virtue and honour of the sex, from the slightest indecency to the rudest violence; and these penalties were greater or smaller according to the rank of the injured party. The compensation for a rape committed upon a nun, was as high as for murder, besides the deprivation of Christian burial; but one committed on a person of immature age, subjected the criminal to a mutilation which effectually prevented the repetition of the crime (89). The chastity of the sex was guarded with great anxiety and care by the ancient laws of Wales (90).

Penalties were also inflicted by the Anglo-Saxon laws on those who were guilty of several other crimes, which

Punishments for violating the honour of the fair sex.

Punishments of several crimes.

(85) Wilkins *Leges Saxon.* p. 113.

(86) Tacit. *de Morib. German.* c. 21.

(88) Wilkins *Leges Saxon.* p. 142.

(90) *Leges Wallicæ*, p. 79.

(87) *Id.* c. 19.

(89) *Id.* p. 40. 72.



do not fall directly under any of the three preceding heads ; as idolatry, forcery, witchcraft, perjury, forgery, coining, and high treason against the whole people, &c. (91). But these penalties were likewise, for the most part, pecuniary : only coiners of base money were condemned to lose their right hands ; and traitors against the whole nation were to be put to death, because no compensation could be made to a whole people for so great an injury (92). In a word, the compensation of injuries, rather than the punishment of crimes, seems to have been the great object of the penal laws of the Anglo Saxons, and of all the other nations of Europe, in the middle ages ; which is the true reason that pecuniary punishments were so frequent, and corporal and capital punishments so uncommon, in those ages.

Laws of  
evidence.

As crimes are commonly committed with great secrecy, the innocent are sometimes suspected and accused, and criminals often conceal and deny their guilt. To discover the truth, that the innocent may not be condemned, nor the guilty acquitted, is one of the most necessary and difficult duties of the judicial office ; and therefore the laws of evidence, which have been made in every period, to direct judges in the investigation of the truth, are of very great importance, and merit our attention. This subject is remarkably curious in the present period ; because the laws of evidence in England, and over all Europe, were then exceeding singular, and different from what they are at present.

Oaths,

Oaths, or solemn appeals to heaven, have been the most ancient and most universal means employed in courts of justice, to engage men to declare the truth : and they were never more frequently employed for this purpose than in the period we are now delineating ; for in all actions, both civil and criminal, both parties appeared in the field of battle, attended by a prodigious number of witnesses (sometimes above a thousand on one side), who were drawn up like two regular armies, and discharged whole volleys of oaths at one another.

Compur-  
gators

When any person was judicially accused of any crime which he denied, he was obliged, in the first place, to purge himself, as it was called, by his own oath, and

(91) Vide Wilkins et Lambard Leges Saxon. passim.

(92) Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 55. 103.



to bring such a number of other persons as the law required in that case, to give their oaths, that they believed him to be innocent, and that he had sworn the truth (93). These persons were commonly called his *compurgators*, because their oaths contributed with his own to clear him from the crime of which he had been accused. Many laws were made in England, and in all the other countries of Europe, for regulating the numbers, qualities, and other circumstances of these compurgators; who made a distinguished figure in the jurisprudence of the middle ages (94). When a person accused produced the number of compurgators required by law, he was said to have purged himself by such a number of hands; because each of the compurgators laid one of his hands on the gospels, or on certain relics, and the person accused laid his hand above all the rest, and swore by God, and by all the hands that were under his, that he was not guilty; the truth of which, each of the compurgators who did not withdraw his hand, was presumed to confirm by his oath (95). In some cases, two, three, or four hands, were sufficient; but in others, much greater numbers, even forty, fifty, or a hundred, were required; though twelve, or twenty-four, seem to have been the most common numbers (96). These compurgators were to be persons of unblemished characters, near neighbours or relations of the person accused, and of the same rank and quality (97). If the criminal was a woman, both law and custom required, that her compurgators should also be women (98). In other cases, women were not admitted to be compurgators (99). If the criminal produced the number of unexceptionable compurgators which the law required, and if all these compurgators took the oath of credulity or belief, as it was called, he was acquitted; but if he could not produce the number required, or if only one of that number refused to take the oath, he was condemned (100).

(93) *Leges Wallicæ*, p. 134.

(94) Lindenbrog. *Codex Legum Antiquarum*. Du Cange Gloss. in voce. *Juramentum*.

(95) *Id. ibid.* *Leges Alaman.* apud Lindenbrog. p. 366.

(96) Du Cange Gloss. in voce. *Juramentum*. *Stiernhook de Jure Sueonum*, p. 118. *Leges Wallicæ*, p. 217.

(97) *Leges Wallicæ*, p. 98. 115.

(98) *Id.* p. 108. 79.

(99) *Hist. Elieuf.* c. 84.

(100) *Leges Wallicæ*, p. 134.

Compurgators not the same with jurymen.

Some writers, eminent for their learning, and particularly for their knowledge of our antiquities and laws, have been of opinion, that the compurgators of the middle ages were the genuine predecessors of the jurors or jurymen of later times (101). This opinion, though supported by great names, is liable to strong objections; and any reader who attentively considers the description of compurgators that is given above, will perceive that they were very different in many respects from our modern juries. They seem to bear a greater resemblance to those witnesses who do not pretend to know any thing of the fact in question, but are brought to speak to the character of the person upon trial.

Witnesses.

The compurgators were not the only persons who gave their oaths in trials, in the middle ages; for besides these, great numbers of witnesses were sworn on both sides, to confirm, or to invalidate the charge (102). But the oaths of witnesses and compurgators were very different. Witnesses swore that they knew the things which they testified to be true: compurgators swore only, that they believed the oath which had been given by the defendant was true (103).

Ceremonies in administering oaths.

This great multiplicity of oaths in the judicial proceedings of the middle ages, had the same effect that it will always have, of diminishing men's veneration for them, and giving occasion to frequent perjury. The legislators of those times employed several devices to prevent this, by awakening the consciences, and keeping alive the religious fears of mankind. With this view, their oaths were couched in the most awful forms of words that could be invented; and these forms were frequently changed, that they might not lose their effect by becoming too familiar (104). An oath was not to be administered to any person unless he was perfectly sober, and even fasting (105). Oaths were commonly administered in a church; and for this reason courts were held in or near a place of public worship (106). The person who took the oath, was obliged to lay his

(101) Spelman. Gloss. in voc. Jurata. Selden. Janus Anglorum, l. 2. c. 4. Lord Kames's Historical Law-tracts, second edit. p. 76.

(102) Leges Wallice, p. 132.

(103) Id. p. 136.

(104) Hicessii Dissert. Epist. p. 112. Wilkins Leges Saxon. l. 63. 64.

(105) Du Cange, p. 1607.

(106) Id. ibid.

right hand upon the altar,—or upon the gospels,—or upon a cross,—or upon the relics of the most venerated saints (107). These, and the like circumstances, were well calculated to make a strong impression on men's imaginations in those ages of ignorance and superstition. To rouse a sense of honour in the breasts of the military men, their oaths were taken with their hands upon their arms (108). This last ceremony was much used by the Danes and Saxons, and esteemed by them a most inviolable obligation to declare the truth. The curious reader will meet with a description of some very singular ceremonies that were sometimes used in Wales, in the administration of oaths, in the book quoted below (109). But after all the devices that were invented by the legislators of the middle ages, to give solemnity to oaths, it is very certain that perjury was very frequent, and one of the reigning vices of those times.

Another very remarkable singularity in the laws of evidence, both in England, and in other countries of Europe, in this period, was the method of ascertaining the degrees of credit that were due to the oaths of persons of different ranks. In those times they weighed, as well as numbered oaths, and had a most curious standard for performing that operation. This standard was the legal weregeld, or price, that was set on the lives of persons of all the different ranks in society. As the weregeld of a thane, for example, was 1200 Saxon shillings, and that of a ceorl only 200 of the same shillings, the oath of one thane was esteemed of equal weight with the oaths of six ceorls (110). But this was certainly a fallacious standard: for though it may be true in general, that the oaths of persons of rank and fortune are more worthy of credit than those of their inferiors, yet this general rule admits of many exceptions; and we have no reason to believe, that men's consciences are so exactly proportioned to the weight of their purses as this law supposes.

Oaths weighed as well as numbered.

Origin of ordeals.

It is easy to perceive, from the above account of the laws of evidence, that it was no easy matter for the most innocent person to clear himself from an accusation, especially in those cases where a great multitude of compurgators was required. Many persons, therefore, when

(107) Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 12. Johnson's Canons, A. D. 734.

(108) Du Cange Gloss. p. 1617. (109) Leges Wallicæ, p. 85.

(110) Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 64.



they were accused of any crime, chose rather to apply to Heaven for evidences of their innocence, than to be at the expence and labour of collecting so prodigious a mass of human testimonies in their favour as the laws demanded. The greatest part of the judges also, in those times of ignorance, had neither patience nor penetration to sift and examine the testimonies of contradicting witnesses, or to investigate the truth in perplexed and doubtful cases; and were therefore very willing to admit those proofs from Heaven, which were supposed to be perfectly decisive and unquestionable. The clergy too supported the authority of this celestial evidence, as it gave them no little influence in all judicial matters. These seem to have been the reasons that rendered trials by different kinds of ordeals so frequent, and of such great authority, in the ages we are now examining; for all these ordeals were called *judicia Dei* (the judgments of God), and were considered as so many solemn and direct appeals to Heaven, to give testimony to the guilt or innocence of persons accused of crimes, when human evidence could not be procured (111). Agreeable to these ideas, all these ordeals were administered by the clergy, and accompanied with many religious rites and ceremonies.

Different  
ordeals.

It is not necessary to enumerate all the different kinds of ordeals that were used in England, and in the other countries of Europe, in this period. The most common were the six following:—the judicial combat,—the ordeal of the cross,—the ordeal of the corsned,—the ordeal of cold water,—the ordeal of hot water,—the ordeal of hot iron.

Judicial  
combat.

The judicial combat being well suited to the genius and spirit of fierce and warlike nations, was one of the most ancient and universal ordeals, and particularly prevailed in Germany in very remote ages (112). This method of trial was also in use in several countries on the continent in this period (113). But as it is not mentioned in any of the Anglo-Saxon laws, and seems not to have been much used in England till after the conquest, the description of it must be remitted to the third chapter of the next book of this work.

(111) Du Cange Gloss. in voc. *Judicium Dei*.

(112) See vol. 1. ch. 3.

(113) *Leges Longobard.* 2. tit. 31. l. 11. Neap. 2. tit. 32. 33. Muratori, t. 3. p. 633, &c.



The cross was an object of so much superstitious veneration in this period, that there is no wonder it was employed as an ordeal. It was indeed used to this purpose in so many different ways, that they cannot be all described. In criminal trials, the judgment of the cross was commonly thus conducted: When the prisoner had declared his innocence upon oath, and appealed to the judgment of the cross, two sticks were prepared exactly like one another; the figure of the cross was cut on one of these sticks, and nothing on the other; each of them was then wrapped up in a quantity of fine white wool, and laid on the altar, or on the relics of the saints; after which a solemn prayer was put up to God, that he would be pleased to discover, by evident signs, whether the prisoner was innocent or guilty. These solemnities being finished, a priest approached the altar, and took up one of the sticks, which was uncovered with much anxiety. If it was the stick marked with the cross, the prisoner was pronounced innocent; if it was the other, he was declared guilty (114). When the judgment of the cross was appealed to in civil causes, the trial was conducted in this manner: The judges, parties, and all concerned, being assembled in a church, each of the parties chose a priest, the youngest and stoutest that he could find, to be his representative in the trial. These representatives were then placed one on each side of some famous crucifix; and at a signal given, they both at once stretched their arms at full length, so as to form a cross with their body. In this painful posture they continued to stand while divine service was performing; and the party whose representative dropped his arms first lost his cause (115).

The corned, or the consecrated bread and cheese, was the ordeal to which the clergy commonly appealed when they were accused of any crimes; in which they acted a very prudent part, as it was attended with no danger or inconveniency (116). This ordeal was performed in this manner: A piece of barley bread, and a piece of cheese, were laid upon the altar, over which a priest pronounced certain conjurations, and prayed with great fervency, that if the person accused was guilty,

(114) Spelman. Gloss. in voc. Crucis Judicium.

(115) Murator. Antiq. t. 3. p. 624.

(116) Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 128.

ty, God would send his angel Gabriel to stop his throat, that he might not be able to swallow that bread and cheese (117). These prayers being ended, the culprit approached the altar, took up the bread and cheese, and began to eat it. If he swallowed freely, he was declared innocent; but if it stuck in his throat, and he could not swallow (which we may presume seldom or never happened), he was pronounced guilty.

Cold-water  
ordeal.

The ordeal of cold-water seems to have been chiefly used in the trials of the common people. It was thus conducted: The person who was to be tried, was put under the direction of a ghostly father, of great reputation for his sanctity, who obliged him to perform many extraordinary acts of devotion, and to keep a rigorous fast for three days. When this fast was ended, and the day appointed for the trial come, the prisoner was publicly conducted to the church, where the priest celebrated mass; and before he permitted the accused to communicate, he addressed him in the following solemn strain: —“ I adjure thee, O man, by the Father, Son, and  
“ Holy Ghost, by the true Christianity which you profess, by the only begotten Son of God, by the Holy  
“ Trinity, by the Holy Gospel, and by all the holy relics in this church, that you do not presume to communicate, or approach this holy altar, if you have  
“ committed this crime, consented to it, or known who  
“ committed it.” If the prisoner made no confession, the priest gave him the communion, saying, “ Let this  
“ body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ be received  
“ by you as a probation this day.” After this a quantity of holy water was consecrated, and then the whole company left the church, and went in procession to the pool, where the ordeal was to be performed. When they arrived there, the priest gave the prisoner a drink of the holy water; saying, “ Let this holy water be to  
“ thee a probation this day.” If the prisoner still continued to deny his guilt, the priest then said a long and very fervent prayer over the pool, adjuring it by every thing that was divine and venerable in heaven or on earth, that if the person to be thrown into it was guilty, it would reject him, and cause him to float upon its surface; but if he was innocent, that it would receive him

into its bosom. The prisoner was then stripped naked, his hands and legs made fast, and a rope tied about his middle, with a knot upon it, at the distance of a yard and a half from his body, and thrown into the pool. If he floated (which was hardly to be imagined) he was taken out, and declared guilty; if he sunk so deep as to bring the knot on the rope under the water, he was instantly pulled out, before he could receive any injury, and pronounced innocent (†118). This ordeal was evidently a very uncertain test of guilt or innocence; but the great solemnity with which it was administered, might sometimes strike terror into the minds of criminals, and bring them to confession. In this ordeal it was presumed that God would work a miracle for the detection of guilt; in the two next ordeals of hot water and hot iron, the presumption was, that he would work a miracle for the vindication of innocence: but there was no solid foundation for either of these presumptions.

The preparations by fastings, prayers, and other religious exercises, for the hot water ordeal, were of the same kind, and of the same duration, with those that were used before the ordeal of cold water. When these private preparations were finished, the person to be tried was conducted with great solemnity to the church, where the priest began, by saying certain prayers suitable to the occasion; after which mass was celebrated; and before the accused was permitted to communicate, he was adjured, in the most awful form of words, to confess if he was guilty. Fire was then kindled under a pot filled with water; and while the water was heating the priest said many prayers composed for that purpose. As soon as the water began to boil, a stone was suspended in it by a string, at the depth of one, two, or three palms, according to the nature of the accusation. The pot was then taken down and placed by the side of the fire; and the prisoner having said the Lord's prayer (not very rapidly we may presume), and marked himself with the sign of the cross, plunged his naked hand and arm into the water, and snatched out the stone. His arm was instantly wrapped in linen cloths, and put into a bag, which was sealed by the judge in the presence of the spectators. The prisoner was then restored to the priest,

(†118) Muratori Antiq. t. 3. p. 613—617. Wilkins Leges Saxon: p. 61.



who produced him in the same church at the end of three days; when the bag was opened, the bandages taken off, and the arm examined by twelve of his own friends, and twelve of the friends of the prosecutor. If any marks of scalding then appeared upon the arm, the prisoner was found guilty; if no such marks could be discovered, he was acquitted (119).

Ordeal of  
hot iron.

The religious preparations for this ordeal were the same with those for the former; and therefore need not be repeated. The ordeal of hot iron was of two kinds, and performed either with a ball of iron, or with a certain number of plough-shares. The former was conducted in this manner: A ball of iron was prepared, of one, two, or three pounds weight, according to the nature of the accusation. When all the prayers and other religious ceremonies were finished, this ball was put into a fire, and made red-hot; after which it was taken out. The prisoner having signed himself with the cross, and sprinkled his hand with holy water, took the ball of hot iron in his hand, and carried it to the distance of nine feet; after which his hand was put into a bag, and sealed up for three days; at the expiration of which it was examined, in the presence of twelve persons of each party. If any marks of burning appeared upon it, the accused was found guilty; if none, he was declared innocent (120). The other way of performing this ordeal was, by making the person who was to be tried, to walk blindfolded, with his feet bare, over nine hot plough-shares, placed at certain distances. If he did this without being burnt, he was adjudged innocent; if not, guilty (121). This seemingly dangerous ordeal of hot iron was appropriated to persons of high rank.

These or-  
deals not  
danger-  
ous.

If we suppose, that few or none escaped conviction who exposed themselves to these fiery trials, we shall be very much mistaken. For the histories of those times contain innumerable examples of persons plunging their naked arms into boiling water, handling red-hot balls of iron, and walking upon burning plough-shares, without receiving the least injury (122). Many learned men have been much puzzled to account for this, and disposed to think that Providence graciously interposed in a mi-

(119) Du Cange Gloss. in voc. *Aque ferventis judicium*.

(120) Du Cange Gloss. voc. *Ferrum candens*.

(121) *Id. ibid.*

(122) Du Cange Gloss. t. 3. p. 399, 400.



raculous manner, for the preservation of injured innocence. But if we examine every circumstance of these fiery ordeals with due attention, we shall see sufficient reason to suspect that the whole was a gross imposition on the credulity of mankind. The accused person was committed wholly to the priest who was to perform the ceremony, three days before the trial, in which he had time enough to bargain with him for his deliverance, and give him instructions how to act his part. On the day of trial, no person was permitted to enter the church, but the priest and the accused, till after the iron was heated; when twelve friends of the accuser, and twelve of the accused, and no more, were admitted, and ranged along the wall on each side of the church, at a respectful distance. After the iron was taken out of the fire, several prayers were said, the accused drank a cup of holy water, and sprinkled his hand with it; which might take a considerable time, if the priest was indulgent. The space of nine feet was measured by the accused himself with his own feet, and he would probably give but scanty measure. He was obliged only to touch one of the marks with the toe of his right foot, and allowed to stretch the other foot as far towards the mark as he could; so that the conveyance was almost instantaneous. His hand was not immediately examined, but wrapped in a cloth, prepared for that purpose, three days. May we not then, from all these precautions, suspect, that these priests were in possession of some secret that secured the hand from the impressions of such a momentary touch of hot iron, or removed all appearances of these impressions in three days; and that they made use of this secret when they saw reason? Such readers as are curious in matters of this kind may find two different directions for making ointments, that will have this effect, in the work quoted below (123). What greatly strengthens these suspicions is, that we meet with no example of any champion of the church who suffered the least injury from the touch of hot iron in this ordeal; but when any one was so fool-hardy as to appeal to it, or to that of hot water, with a view to deprive the church of any of her possessions, he never failed to burn his fingers, and lose his cause (124).

(123) Du Cange Gloss. t. 3. col. 397.

(124) Id. t. 1. p. 611.

If the Anglo-Saxon constitution, government, and laws, do not appear so excellent and perfect in all respects, in the above description, as they have been sometimes represented, and as the fond admirers of antiquity have been used to think them, the author of this work cannot help it; and hath nothing to say in his own defence, but that he hath used his best endeavours to discover the truth, to represent it fairly, and to guard against mistakes. It must, in particular, be evident to every intelligent reader, that many of their penal laws were founded on wrong principles; and many of their modes of trial led to wrong decisions.

THE  
H I S T O R Y  
OF  
G R E A T B R I T A I N.

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B O O K II.

C H A P. IV.

*The history of Learning in Great Britain, from the arrival of the Saxons, A. D. 449, to the landing of William duke of Normandy, A. D. 1066.*

THE history of learning in unlearned ages (like those we are now delineating) is naturally a barren and unpleasant subject, and can hardly be rendered both entertaining and instructive by any art. If the author contents himself with general observations, his work will not be instructive or satisfactory to the inquisitive; and if he enters deep into critical investigations, it will become tedious to the bulk of readers. In a general history, where learning is only one of many subjects introduced, it seems most advisable to steer a middle course, and endeavour to give as much satisfaction to the learned as possible, without disgusting others. It will be necessary also, to prevent confusion in this period (which is long as well as dark), to divide it into the several centuries of which it consisted; giving a concise account,—of the state of learning,—of the most learned men,—and of the chief seminaries of learning,—in each of these centuries, in their natural order.

Cent. V.  
Plan of  
this chapter.

Cent. V.

State of  
learningfrom A. D.  
449 to  
A. D. 500.

After learning had flourished in provincial Britain, from the end of the first to the middle of the fourth century, it then began to decline, and by various means (mentioned in the conclusion of the fourth chapter of the first book of this work) was reduced to a very languishing state, before the arrival of the Saxons (1). A few of the unhappy Britons, amidst all the calamities of their country, retained a love to learning, and endeavoured to cherish the expiring light of science; but their history is so blended with fables, by the ignorant zeal of those dark ages, in which nothing was thought great that was not incredible, that it is impossible to discover the real extent of their knowledge. How many strange stories, for example, are told of the birth, prophecies, and magical feats of the famous Merlin, which are not worth repeating, and proceeded from nothing but his possessing a greater degree of knowledge than his cotemporaries (2)? The same may be said of Melchin, Magan, and several other British philosophers; who, having received their education in the Roman schools, were admired as magicians by their countrymen (3). They knew more indeed of mechanics, natural philosophy, astronomy, and some other parts of learning, than the age in which they lived was commonly acquainted with; though it is very probable, that their knowledge was not extensive. Some few of the Christian clergy also among the Britons, at this time, were a little more learned, or rather less ignorant, than their brethren, which hath procured them a place in the annals of their country. Among these, Illutus a presbyter, and Dubricius a bishop, both disciples of St. Germanus, were most distinguished. These two, by the direction of their master, established schools for the education of youth; in which they presided, with great honour to themselves and advantage to their country. Dubricius had the chief care of two of these seminaries of learning, situated at Hentland and Mochrhos, on the river Wye, and so well frequented, that they sometimes contained no fewer than a thousand students. Illutus taught with equal success and reputation, at a place, from him, called *Lantwit*, near Boverton in Glamorganthire. In

(1) See vol. 1.

(2) Leland de Script. Britan. t. 1. p. 42.

(3) Id. t. 1. p. 41. 49.



these schools many of the greatest saints and most eminent prelates of those times received their education (4). Cent. V.

It is in vain to seek for learning, or learned men, among the Saxons, at their arrival in Britain. For though they were not absolute strangers to the use of letters; yet, like all the other northern nations, they were so much addicted to plundering and piratical expeditions, that they utterly despised the peaceful pursuits of science (5). Their arrival, therefore, in this island, was so far from being favourable to the cause of learning, that the very last sparks of it were almost quite extinguished in all those parts of it where their arms prevailed; in which the most profound darkness reigned till after the introduction of Christianity. The Saxons enemies to learning.

England was a scene of so much confusion and misery in the sixth century, that learning could not be cultivated in it with any success. For during the whole course of that century war raged with little intermission, the sword was hardly ever sheathed, and the ancient inhabitants, after a long and bloody struggle, were either extirpated, enslaved, or expelled their country. A great part of Britain had indeed been conquered by the Romans; but these polite and beneficent conquerors instructed and improved those whom they had subdued. The Saxons, being a fierce illiterate people, acted a very different part, and their destructive progress was marked with darkness and desolation. These observations are so true, that there was not so much as one person possessed of any degree of literary fame who flourished in England in the sixth century. In this dismal period, therefore, we must look for any little glimmerings of science that were still left in Britain, among the mountains of Wales and Caledonia. State of learning in the sixth century among the Anglo-Saxons.

Great numbers of British young men received a learned education in the schools established by Dubricius and Illutus; but, despairing of encouragement, or even safety, at home, the greatest part of them abandoned their native country, and settled in different places of the continent, but chiefly in Brittany; where some of them were advanced to the highest stations in the church. One of the most illustrious of these was Samson who became archbishop of Dole, and is said to have been ~~one~~ Among the other British nations.

(4) Carte's Hist. v. i. p. 185, &c.

(5) Hickesii Thesaur. Præfat. ad l. 2.

Cent. VI. of the most learned, as well as pious prelates, of the age in which he lived (6). Those scholars of Dubricius and Illutus who remained in Britain, prevented the total extinction of literature in this island, and are on that account entitled to a place in history; though we have no reason to suppose that their erudition was very great. Gildas the historian was one of these, and is the only British author of the sixth century whose works are published (7). He was so much admired in the dark age in which he flourished, that he obtained the appellation of *Gildas the Wise*, though his works do not seem to entitle him to that distinction. His history of Britain is a very short jejune performance, only valuable for its antiquity, and from our total want of better information. His satirical epistle concerning the British princes and clergy of his own times, discovers him to have been a man of a gloomy querulous disposition; for it is hardly possible to believe that they were all such odious miscreants as he represents them. The style of both these works is very involved and tumid, and must give us a very unfavourable idea of the taste of that age in which such a writer was admired. St. Theleaus; St. David, the first bishop of Menevia, from him called *St. David's*; St. Afaph, the first bishop of the see of that name; Daniel, the first bishop of Bangor, and several other saints and bishops who flourished in Wales in this century, are said to have been eminent for their learning as well as piety; and they probably were so, according to the measure and taste of the times in which they lived.

Among  
the Scots.

It hath been keenly disputed by the Scotch and Irish antiquaries, whether Columbanus, a learned monk and writer of the sixth century, was born in Scotland or Ireland (8). The truth seems to be, that there were two of that name, the one an Irishman, and bishop of Laghlin; the other a Scotchman, founder of the abbey of Luxevill in France, and that of Bobio in Italy. This last was educated in the famous monastery of Iona; from whence he went into France, A. D. 589, accompanied by twelve other monks, and there founded the abbey of Luxevill, near Besançon, which he governed about twenty years with great reputation. When he was in

(6) Leland de Script. Britan. t. 1. p. 69.

(7) Hist. Britan. Script. a Gale edit. t. 1. p. 5.

(8) Vide Leland, Bale, Pitsde Script. Britan. Ware de Script. Hiber. t. 1. Mackenzie's Scotch Writers, p. 17.

this station, he was attacked by the Pope, Gregory the Cent. VI. Great, for observing Easter at a different time from the church of Rome, and wrote several letters and tracts in defence of his own practice, and that of his country. He composed, for the government of his own monks, a system of laws, which were so severe, that if any of them smiled in the time of divine service, he was to receive fifty lashes with a whip. By another of these laws, his monks were obliged to meet three times every night in the church, and at each time to sing thirty-six psalms and twelve anthems. If they regularly observed this rule, they would not be much disposed to smile. Theoderic king of France was for some time a great admirer of Columbanus; but that austere abbot at length offended him so much by the severity of his reproofs, that the prince obliged him to quit the kingdom. After spending a few years in Switzerland, in labouring, with some success, to convert the people to Christianity, he retired in his old age into Lombardy; where he founded the abbey of Bobio, in which he died A. D. 615 (9). It seems to be quite unnecessary to swell this part of our work with a more particular account of the literati of this most unhappy and benighted age. For though some of them might be men of real genius; yet the wretched taste of the times in which they lived, the great difficulty of procuring good books and good masters, with many other disadvantages under which they laboured, prevented their arriving at much excellence in any of the sciences. The truth is, that the only parts of learning that were much cultivated by the British and Scotch clergy of this century were,—the Latin language—polemical divinity,—and ecclesiastical law; and a very small portion of these was sufficient to procure any one the character of a very learned man.

The conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity, in the course of the seventh century, contributed not a little to enlighten their minds, and promote the interests of learning, as well as of religion, in England. Before that event, there was no such thing as learning, or any means of obtaining it, in that part of Britain which they inhabited, which was involved in the most profound darkness. Their ancient religion was gross and irration-

State of  
learning in  
the seventh  
century  
among the  
Anglo-  
Saxons.

(9) Mackenzie's Scotch Writers, p. 17. Murat. Antiq. t. 3. p. 826.



Cent. VII. nal in its principles, cruel and sanguinary in its ceremonies, and had a tendency to inspire them with nothing but a brutal contempt of death, and a savage delight in war. As long, therefore, as they continued in the belief and practice of that wretched superstition, they seem to have been incapable either of science or civility; but by their conversion to Christianity, they became accessible to both. It must indeed be confessed, that the system of Christianity in which the Anglo-Saxons were instructed at their conversion was far from being pure and genuine; but still it contained many valuable discoveries, concerning—the perfections and providence of the one living and true God,—the nature of religious worship,—and the rules of moral conduct, to which they had been absolute strangers. By their embracing Christianity, they were naturally led to inquiries and speculations on these and various other subjects, which could not fail both to enlighten and enlarge their minds, and render them capable both of literary and religious improvements. Before their conversion to Christianity, the Anglo-Saxons seem to have had little or no intercourse, except in the way of hostility, with any other nations who could instruct or civilize them; but by that event a friendly communication was opened between them and Rome, which was then the chief seat of learning in Europe (10). Besides all this, such of the first Anglo-Saxon converts as designed to embrace the clerical profession (of which there were many), were obliged to apply to some parts of learning, to qualify themselves for that office; and it became necessary to provide schools for their instruction. The truth of these observations is confirmed by many unquestionable facts, which prove, that the English began to pay some attention to learning (which they had before neglected) as soon as they were converted to Christianity. The first Christian king in England was the first English legislator who committed his laws to writing (11). Sigbert king of the East-Angles, immediately after his conversion, founded a famous school for the education of youth in his dominions, A. D. 630, after the model of those which he had seen in France, and at Canterbury, whence he brought teachers (12). In a word, some of the English clergy in the end of this and

(10) Murator. Antiq. t. 3. p. 810.

(11) Wilkins Leges Saxon.

(12) Bed. Hist. Eccles.



in the next century became famous for their learning, Cent. VII. and were admired by all Europe as prodigies of erudition (13). So great and happy a change did the introduction of Christianity, though not in its purest form, produce in the mental improvements of our ancestors.

Though the English began to apply to learning in the former part of the seventh century, yet it was near the conclusion of it before any of them acquired much literary fame. Aldhelm, a near relation, if not the nephew, of Ina, king of the West-Saxons, was the first who did so. Having received the first part of his education in the school which one Macdulf, a learned Scot, had set up in the place where Malmesbury now stands, he travelled into France and Italy for his improvement (14). At his return home, he studied some time under Adrian, abbot of St. Augustin's in Canterbury, the most learned professor of the sciences who had ever been in England (15). In these different seminaries he acquired a very uncommon stock of knowledge, and became famous for his learning, not only in England, but in foreign countries; whence several learned men sent him their writings for his perusal and correction; particularly prince Arcivil, a son of the king of Scotland, who wrote many pieces, which he sent to Aldhelm, "intreating him to give them the last polish, by rubbing off their Scotch rust (16)." He was the first Englishman who wrote in the Latin language both in prose and verse, and composed a book for the instruction of his countrymen in the prosody of that language. Besides this, he wrote several other treatises on various subjects; some of which are lost, and others published by Martin Delrio and Canisius (17). Venerable Bede, who flourished in the end of this and the beginning of the next century, gives the following character of Aldhelm: "He was a man of universal erudition, having an elegant style, and being wonderfully well acquainted with books, both on philosophical and religious subjects (18)." King Alfred the Great declared, that Aldhelm was the best of all the Saxon poets, and that a favourite song, which was universally sung in his time, near two hundred years

(13) Murator. Antiq. t. 3. col. 618. Eruckeri Hist. Philosoph. t. 3. p. 574.

(14) Anglia Sacra, t. 2. p. 2, 3. (15) Id. ibid.

(16) Id. ibid. (17) Cave Hist. Literar. Secul. 7. A. D. 680.

(18) Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. 5. c. 18.

Cent. VII. after its author's death, was of his composition (19).

When he was abbot of Malmſbury, having a fine voice, and great ſkill in muſic as well as poetry, and obſerving the backwardneſs of his barbarous countrymen to liſten to grave inſtructions, he compoſed a number of little poems, which he ſung to them after maſs in the ſweeteſt manner; by which they were gradually inſtructed and civilized (20). After this excellent perſon had governed the monaſtery of Malmſbury, of which he was the founder, about thirty years, he was made biſhop of Shereburn, where he died A. D. 709 (21).

Life of Theodore. Though Theodore, who was advanced to the arch-biſhopric of Canterbury A. D. 668, was not an Engliſhman by birth; yet as he contributed ſo much to the introduction and improvement of learning in England, he merits our grateful remembrance in this place. This excellent prelate, who was a native of Tarſus in Cilicia, and one of the moſt learned men of his age, being promoted by the pope to the government of the infant-church of England, and informed of the groſs and general ignorance of the people of that country, reſolved to promote the intereſt of uſeful learning amongſt them, as the moſt effectual means of promoting that of true religion. With this view he brought with him from Rome a valuable collection of books, and ſeveral profeſſors of the ſciences, particularly abbot Adrian, to aſſiſt him in the education of the Engliſh youth (22). This ſcheme, as we learn from Bede, was crowned with the greateſt ſucceſs. “ Theſe two great men (Theodore  
“ and Adrian), excelling in all parts of ſacred and civil  
“ learning, collected a great multitude of ſcholars,  
“ whom they daily inſtructed in the ſciences, reading  
“ lectures to them on poetry, aſtronomy, and arithmetic,  
“ as well as on divinity and the holy ſcriptures (23).”

Sciences Studied in this century. The circle of the ſciences that were taught and ſtudied in England in the ſeventh century, when learning was in its infancy, we cannot ſuppoſe to have been very large, though it was not really ſo confined as we might, on a ſuperficial view, imagine. Grammar, particularly that of the Greek and Latin languages, was taught and

(19) *Anglia Sacra*, t. 2. p. 4.

(20) *Id. ibid.* p. 9.

(21) *Id. ibid.* p. 23.

(22) *Cave Hiſt. Lit. Sec. 7. Anglia Sacra*, t. 1. p. 2.

(23) *Bede. Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 4. c. 2.*

studied with much diligence and no little success. Venerable Bede assures us, that he had conversed with some of the scholars of Theodore and Adrian, who understood Greek and Latin as well as they did their native tongue (24). It is evident from the works of Aldhelm, which are still extant, that he had read the most celebrated authors of Greece and Rome, and that he was no contemptible critic in the languages in which these authors wrote. The testimony of a cotemporary, well acquainted with the subject, is always most satisfactory, when it can be obtained; and therefore the reader will not be displeased with the following account given by Aldhelm himself, in a letter to Hedda bishop of Winchester, of the sciences which he and others studied in the school of Canterbury. “ I confess, most reverend  
 “ father, that I had resolved, if circumstances would  
 “ permit, to spend the approaching Christmas in the  
 “ company of my relations, and to enjoy, for some time,  
 “ the felicity of your conversation. But since I now  
 “ find it will be impossible for me to accomplish that  
 “ design, for various reasons, which the bearer of this  
 “ letter will communicate, I hope you will have the  
 “ goodness to excuse my not waiting upon you as I intended. The truth is, that there is a necessity for  
 “ spending a great deal of time in this feat of learning,  
 “ especially for one who is inflamed with the love of  
 “ reading, and is earnestly desirous, as I am, of being  
 “ intimately acquainted with all the secrets of the Roman  
 “ jurisprudence. Besides, there is another study in which  
 “ I am engaged, which is still more tedious and perplexing,—to make myself master of all the rules of a  
 “ hundred different kinds of verses, and of the musical  
 “ modulations of words and syllables. This study is  
 “ rendered more difficult, and almost inextricable, by  
 “ the great scarcity of able teachers. But it would far  
 “ exceed the bounds of a familiar letter to explain this  
 “ matter fully, and lay open all the secrets of the art of  
 “ metre, concerning letters, syllables, poetic feet and  
 “ figures, verses, tones, time, &c. Add to this the  
 “ doctrine of the seven divisions of poetry, with all their  
 “ variations, and what number of feet every different  
 “ kind of verse must consist of. The perfect knowledge

(24) Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. 4. c. 2.

Cent. VII. “ of all this, and several other things of the like kind, cannot, I imagine, be acquired in a short space of time. But what shall I say of arithmetic, whose long and intricate calculations are sufficient to overwhelm the mind, and throw it into despair? For my own part, all the labour of my former studies, by which I had made myself a complete master of several sciences, was trifling in comparison of what this cost me; so that I may say with St. Jerome, upon a similar occasion,—Before I entered upon that study, I thought myself a master; but then I found I was but a learner.—However, by the blessing of God, and assiduous reading, I have at length overcome the greatest difficulties, and found out the method of calculating suppositions, which are called the parts of a number. I believe it will be better to say nothing at all of astronomy, the zodiac, and its twelve signs revolving in the heavens, which require a long illustration, than to disgrace that noble art by too short and imperfect an account; especially as there are some parts of it, as astrology, and the perplexing calculations of horoscopes, which require the hand of a master to do them justice (25).” This account of the studies of the youth of England who applied to learning, as it was written by one of themselves, exactly eleven hundred years ago, is really curious, though we have no reason to conclude that it contains a complete enumeration of all the sciences that were then cultivated in England, but only of those in the study of which the writer was then engaged. Archbishop Theodore read lectures on medicine; but Bede hath preserved one of his doctrines, which doth not serve to give us a very high idea of his knowledge in that art, viz. “ That it was very dangerous to perform phlebotomy on the fourth day of the moon; because both the light of the moon, and the tides of the sea, were then upon the increase (26).” Music, logic, rhetoric, &c. were then taught and studied; but in so imperfect a manner, that it is unnecessary to be more particular in our account of them.

Seminaries  
of learn-  
ing.

As the youth in those parts of England which had embraced the Christian religion, began to apply to learning with some eagerness in the seventh century, several

(25) *Anglia Sacra*, t. 2. p. 6, 7.

(26) *Bede. Hist. Eccles.* l. 5. c. 3.



schools were then established for their instruction. One Cent. VII. of the most illustrious of those schools was that of Canterbury, founded by Augustin, the apostle of the English, and his companions, and greatly improved by archbishop Theodore (27). In this school a library was also founded, and enriched from time to time with many valuable books, brought from Rome by Augustin, Theodore, and others: and here the greatest part of the prelates and abbots who flourished in England in this century received their education. Sigbert, who was advanced to the throne of East-Anglia A. D. 631, having lived some years an exile in France, was there converted to Christianity, and instructed in several branches of learning, for which he had a taste. After his accession to the throne of his ancestors, he laboured with great earnestness to promote the conversion and instruction of his subjects. With this view, he instituted a school in his dominions, in imitation of those which he had seen in France and at Canterbury; from which last place he was furnished with professors by archbishop Honorius, who approved of the design (28). As the place where this ancient seminary of learning was established is not mentioned by Bede, it hath been the occasion of a controversy between the two famous universities of England; the advocates for the superior antiquity of the one contending that it was at Cambridge, while those who favour the other think it more probable that it was at Dumnoc (Dunwich), which was the capital of that little kingdom, and also the seat of its bishops (29). “Non nostrum est tantas componere lites.” The learned reader would be surprised, if he heard nothing in this place of the two famous schools of Creeklade and Lechlade, which are said to have been founded by the companions of Brute the Trojan, to have flourished through many ages, and to have been transferred to Oxford (nobody can tell how or when), and to have given birth to that celebrated university (30). But it would be very improper to swell this work with a heap of fabulous tales, equally absurd and contradictory. Several monasteries were founded in different parts of England in the course

(27) Bedæ Opera a J. Smith edita, Append. No. 14.

(28) Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. 3. c. 18.

(29) Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. 3. c. 18. Append. No. 14.

(30) A. Wood, Hist. Univer. Oxon. p. 4—6.

**Csnt. VII.** of this century; and in each of these a school was opened for the education of youth: so that, as Bede observes, "these were happy and enlightened times, in comparison of those which had preceded them; for none wanted teachers who were willing to be instructed (31)." In one of these monasteries, Bede himself, the great luminary of England, and of the Christian world, in the end of this and beginning of the next century, had his education.

**Learned  
Britons  
and Scots.**

The state of learning among the Scots and Britons was much the same in this as it had been in the former century; and several persons, not unlearned, according to the measure of the times in which they lived, flourished in both countries in this period. Dinotus, who was abbot of the famous monastery of Bangor in Flintshire, and flourished in the beginning of this century, is said to have been a man of uncommon eloquence and learning; and as such was chosen by the British clergy to be their advocate in a conference with Augustin archbishop of Canterbury, and his clergy, A. D. 601; a choice which seems to have been well made. When Augustin pressed the British clergy to make their submissions to the pope, and acknowledge himself as their archbishop, Dinotus replied, with much spirit and good sense, "Be it known unto you with certainty, that we are all willing to be obedient and subject to the church of God, to the pope of Rome, and to every good Christian, as far as to love every one in his degree, in perfect charity, and to help every one of them by word and deed to be the children of God; and other obedience than this I do not know to be due to him whom ye call the pope; and this obedience we are ready to pay to him, and to every Christian, continually. Besides, we are already under the government of the bishop of Caerleon, who is our spiritual guide under God (32)." Nennius abbot of Banchor, who wrote a history of the Britons, which hath been often printed, Kentegern, founder of the church of Glasgow, and several others of the same class, flourished among the Scots and Britons in this century; but none of them appear to have been so eminent for their learning as to merit a place in the general history of their country. It is only

(31) Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. 4. c. 2.

(32) Spelman. Concil. t. 1. b. 138.

proper to observe, that after the destruction of the famous monastery of Banchor, A. D. 613, which had been a kind of university for the education of the British youth, learning declined very sensibly among the posterity of the ancient Britons; which, together with the increasing miseries of their country, is the reason that we shall henceforth meet with very few of that unhappy people who were eminent for their learning. Cent. VII.

One thing that greatly retarded the progress of learning among the English, and made the acquisition of literary knowledge extremely difficult in this century, was the prodigious scarcity of books, which had been either carried away by the Romans, or so entirely destroyed by the Scots, Picts, and Saxons, that it is a little uncertain whether there was so much as one book left in England before the arrival of Augustin. Nor was this deficiency easily supplied, as there was a necessity of bringing them all from foreign countries, and chiefly from Rome, where they could not be procured without great difficulty, and a most incredible expence. One example will be sufficient to give the reader some idea of the price of books in England in this century. Benedict Biscop, founder of the monastery of Weremouth in Northumberland, made no fewer than five journeys to Rome to purchase books, vessels, vestments, and other ornaments, for his monastery; by which he collected a very valuable library; for one book out of which (a volume on cosmography), king Alfred gave him an estate of eight hides, or as much land as eight ploughs could labour (33). This bargain was concluded by Benedict with the king a little before his death, A. D. 690; and the book was delivered, and the estate received by his successor abbot Ceolfred. At this rate, none but kings, bishops, and abbots, could be possessed of any books; which is the reason that there were then no schools but in kings palaces, bishops seats, or monasteries. This was also one reason why learning was then wholly confined to princes, priests, and a very few of the chief nobility. Scarcity of books in this century.

The eighth century seems, upon the whole, to have been the most dark and dismal part of that long night of ignorance and barbarism that succeeded the fall of the Cent. VIII.  
State of learning

(33) Bed. Hist. Abbat. Wermuthen. edit. a J. Smith, p. 297, 8. Roman



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nent in  
the eighth  
century.

Roman empire. This is acknowledged by all the writers of literary history, who represent the nations on the continent as in danger of sinking into the savage state, and losing the small remains of learning that had hitherto subsisted amongst them (34). Even at Rome, which had long been the seat of learning, as well as empire, the last glimmerings of the lamp of science were on the point of expiring, and the pretended literati wrote in the most barbarous manner, without regarding the plainest rules of grammar using such phrases as these :—*Ut inter eis dissensio fiat, et divisio inveniantur*,—*Una cum omnes Beneventani*, &c. (35). France was still in a worse condition, if possible, in this respect : for when Charlemagne, as we are told by one of his historians, began to attempt the restoration of learning, A. D. 787, the study of the liberal arts had quite ceased in that kingdom, and he was obliged to bring all his teachers from other countries (36). We may judge, that the state of learning in Spain, at this time, was no better, by their being obliged to make canons against ordaining men priests or bishops who could neither read, nor sing psalms (37). This deplorable decline of learning on the continent was partly owing to the establishment of the Lombards in Italy, and the incursions of the Saracens in France and Spain, and partly to a wrong turn that had been given to the studies of the clergy in all these countries. Ever since the reformation that had been made in the music of the church by Gregory the Great, in the end of the sixth and the beginning of the seventh century, great attention had been given to that art, till by degrees it became almost the only thing to which the clergy applied, to the total neglect of all severer studies. A great number of treatises were written by the fathers of the church on this subject, and the best singer was esteemed the most learned man (38). When Charlemagne visited Rome, A. D. 786, the French clergy in his retinue were so proud of their own singing, that they challenged the Roman clergy to a musical combat. The Romans, after calling the French fools, rustics, blockheads, and many other ill names, accepted the challenge, and ob-

(34) Bruckeri Hist. Philosoph. t. 3. p. 571.

(35) Murator. Antiq. t. 3. p. 811.

(37) Bruckeri Hist. Philosoph. t. 3. p. 571.

(38) Fabricii Biblioth. Lat. t. 1. p. 644.

(36) Id. ibid.



tained a complete victory, to the great mortification of their antagonists (39).

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When the muses were thus expelled from all the countries on the continent, they found an asylum in the British isles, where several persons applied to the study of the sciences, with great ardour and no little success. The schools established by archbishop Theodore at Canterbury, and by king Sigbert in East-Anglia, had produced some good scholars; who being advanced to the highest stations, both in church and state, became great encouragers of learning; which, having all the charms of novelty, was pursued by several ingenious men with uncommon diligence. In a king of Wessex, Offa king of Mercia, Aldfrid king of Northumberland, and several other princes who flourished in this period, were great patrons of learning and learned men, who enjoyed much tranquillity, and were furnished with books, in the monasteries that were then founded. All these circumstances concurring, occasioned a transient gleam of light to arise in England in the eighth century; which, it must be confessed, would not have appeared very bright, if it had not been both preceded and followed by such profound darkness. It was to this period that Alfred the Great alludes in the following passages of his famous letter to Wulfseg bishop of London: ‘ I must inform you, my  
‘ dear friend, that I often revolve in my mind the many  
‘ learned and wise men who formerly flourished in the  
‘ English nation, both among the clergy and laity. How  
‘ happy were those times! Then the princes governed  
‘ their subjects with great wisdom, according to the word  
‘ of God, and became famous for their wise and upright  
‘ administration. Then the clergy were equally diligent in reading, studying, and teaching; and this  
‘ country was so famous for learning, that many came  
‘ hither from foreign parts to be instructed. Then  
‘ (before all was spoiled and burnt) the churches and  
‘ monasteries were filled with libraries of excellent  
‘ books in several languages.—When I reflected on  
‘ this, I sometimes wondered that those learned men,  
‘ who were spread over all England, had not translated  
‘ the best of these books into their native tongue. But  
‘ then I presently answered myself, that those wise

State of  
learning in  
England  
in this  
century.

(39) Launojus de Scholis Celeb. c. 1. p. 3.

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‘ men could not imagine, that ever learning would be  
‘ so much neglected as to make this necessary, and be-  
‘ lieved, that the more languages were understood, the  
‘ more learning would abound in any country (40).’

To give the reader a just idea of the state of learning in this period, of which this great prince entertained so high an opinion, it will be necessary to give a short sketch of the personal history, and learned labours, of a few who were most eminent for their erudition, and from their works to collect what sciences were then cultivated, and to what degree of perfection they were brought.

Life of  
Tobias  
bishop of  
Rocheſter.

Tobias bishop of Rocheſter, who flouriſhed in the beginning of this century, after having ſtudied ſeveral years in the monaſtery of Glaſſonbury, finiſhed his education at Canterbury, under archbiſhop Theodore, and his coadjutor abbot Adrian. In this famous ſchool, as we are told by his cotemporary Bede, he made great proficiency in all parts of learning, both civil and eccleſiaſtical; and the Greek and Latin languages became as familiar to him as his native tongue (41): an attainment not very common in more enlightened times. All the works of this learned prelate periſhed in the ſubſequent depredations of the Danes (42).

Life of  
Bede.

Beda the preſbyter, commonly called *venerable Bede*, though he never attained to any higher ſtation in the church than that of a ſimple monk, was the great luminary of England, and of the Chriſtian world, in this century. This excellent perſon was born at Weremouth, in the kingdom of Northumberland, A. D. 672, and educated in the monaſtery of St. Peter, founded at that place about two years after his birth, by the famous Benedict Biſcop, one of the moſt learned men and greateſt travellers of his age (43). Bede enjoyed great advantages in this monaſtery for the acquiſition of knowledge; having the uſe of an excellent library, which had been collected by the founder in his travels, and the aſſiſtance of the beſt maſters. Abbot Benedict himſelf, Ceolfred his ſucceſſor, and St. John of Beverley, were all his preceptors, and took much pleaſure in teaching one who

(40) Spelman, Vita Elfredi, Append. No. 3. p. 196.

(41) Bed. Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. 5. c. 23.

(42) Leland de Script. Britan. t. 1. p. 91.

(43) Bed. ad fin. Epitom. Hiſt. Eccleſ. et in Vita Abbat. Weresmouth.

profited so much by their instructions (44). These favourable circumstances concurring with an excellent genius, an ardent thirst for knowledge, and unwearied diligence in the pursuit of it, enabled him to make uncommon progress. Being no less pious than he was learned, he was ordained a deacon in the nineteenth year of his age, by John of Beverley, then bishop of Hexham, afterwards archbishop of York. It seems to have been about this time that he removed from the monastery of St. Peter's at Weremouth, where he had been educated, to that of St. Paul's at Iarrow, near the mouth of the river Tyne, then newly founded by the same Benedict. In this monastery of Iarrow he spent the remainder of his life, employing all his time (as he himself acquaints us) in performing the offices of devotion in the church, teaching, reading, and writing (45). At the age of thirty, A. D. 702, he was ordained a priest by the same pious prelate from whom he had received deacon's orders (46). Though Bede contented himself with living in a humble station, in a little monastery, and obscure corner of the world, the fame of his learning had by this time spread over all Europe, and the sovereign pontiff was desirous of his company and advice in the government of the church. This appears from the following passage of a letter from pope Sergius to Ceolfred abbot of Weremouth and Iarrow:—‘ Some questions have arisen concerning ecclesiastical affairs, which require the most serious examination of men of the greatest learning. I therefore beseech and require you, by the love of God, by your regard to religion, and by the obedience which you owe to the universal church, that you do not refuse to comply with our present requisition, but without delay, send to the apostles Peter and Paul, and to me, Beda, the pious servant of God, a presbyter in your monastery. You may depend upon it, that he shall be sent back to you, as soon as the solemnities of these consultations are happily ended. Consider, I beseech you, that whatever good may, on this occasion, be done to the universal church, by means of his excellent wisdom, will redound particularly to the honour and advantage of

(44) Bale de Script. Britan. p. 94.

(45) Bed. ad fin. Epit. Hist. Eccles.

(46) Id. ibid.



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‘you and your monastery (47).’ A noble testimony of the high opinion that was entertained of the wisdom and learning of our humble presbyter in the court of Rome. It is evident, however, from Bede’s own testimony, that he did not go to Rome in consequence of this requisition, which was probably owing to the death of pope Sergius, which happened soon after he had written the above letter (48). The industry of this excellent person in acquiring knowledge was so very great, that he made himself master of every branch of literature that it was possible for any man to acquire in the age and circumstances in which he lived; nor was his diligence in communicating this knowledge, both to his cotemporaries and to posterity, less remarkable. This appears from the prodigious number of works which he composed, on so great a variety of subjects, that we may almost venture to affirm they contain all the learning that was then known in the world. These works have been often published in different cities of Europe, as Paris, Basil, Cologne, &c.; but never in any part of Britain, to which the author was so great an honour. The only complete edition of Bede’s works that I have had an opportunity of examining is that at Cologne, A. D. 1612, in eight volumes in folio. It would require a large work to give the reader even an imperfect idea of the erudition contained in these volumes; and therefore he must be contented with the catalogue of the several treatises contained in them, which he will find in the Appendix (49). This will at least make him acquainted with the subjects on which this great man employed his pen. Many writers, both ancient and modern, have bestowed the highest encomiums on the genius and learning of Bede. ‘How much (says one of the best judges of literary merit) was Beda distinguished amongst the British monks, who, to say the truth, was not only the most learned of them, but, the age in which he lived considered, of the whole western world (50).’ This character, so honourable to Bede, is confirmed by many persons of the greatest name in the republic of letters; while some few have spoke of him in a strain not quite so favourable (51). But these last appear plainly not

(47) G. Malmf. de Gest. Reg. Angl. l. 1. c. 3.

(48) See Biographia Britannica, artic. Bede.

(49) Append. No. 4. (50) Conrin. de Antiquit. Acad. Dissert. 3.

(51) Biograph. Britan. art. Bede, not. N. O.



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to have considered the state of the times in which he lived, and the disadvantages under which he laboured, comparing him, not with his own cotemporaries, but with the learned men of the last and present century; which is unjust. After this modest and humble presbyter, the great ornament of his age and of his country, had spent a long life in the diligent pursuit and communication of useful knowledge, and in the practice of every virtue, he died in his cell at Iarrow, in a most devout and pious manner, May 26, A. D. 735 (52). The greatest blemish, or rather weakness, of this great man, was his credulity, and too easy belief of the many legendary stories of miracles which he hath inserted in his ecclesiastical history: but this was so much the character of the age in which he lived, that it required more than human sagacity and strength of mind to guard against it. He was called *the wise Saxon*, by his cotemporaries, and *venerable Beda* by posterity; and as long as great modesty, piety, and learning, united in one character, are the objects of veneration amongst mankind, the memory of Beda must be revered.

The remarkable decline of learning in England after the death of Beda is painted in very strong colours by one of the best of our ancient historians. ‘The death of Beda was fatal to learning, and particularly to history, in England; insomuch that it may be said, that almost all knowledge of past events was buried in the same grave with him, and hath continued in that condition even to our times. There was not so much as one Englishman left behind him, who emulated the glory which he had acquired by his studies, imitated his example, or pursued the path to knowledge which he had pointed out. A few indeed of his survivors were good men, and not unlearned; but they generally spent their lives in an inglorious silence; while the far greatest number sunk into sloth and ignorance, until by degrees the love of learning was quite extinguished in this island for a long time (53).’ Several other causes, besides the death of Beda, contributed to bring on this deplorable ignorance, and neglect of learning; particularly, frequent civil wars, and the destructive depredations of the Danes; who, being Pagans, destroyed

Decline of  
learning  
after the  
death of  
Beda.

(52) Simeon Dunelm. l. 3. c. 7. W. Malmf. l. 1. c. 3.

(53) W. Walslm. l. 1. c. 3.

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Lives of  
Acca bi-  
shop of  
Hexham,  
and Eg-  
bert arch-  
bishop of  
York.

the monasteries, burnt their libraries, and killed or dispersed the monks, who were the only students in those unhappy times.

A few of the friends of Beda, who survived him, supported the declining interests of learning for a little time, and on that account are intitled to a place in this part of our work. The most considerable of these was Acca bishop of Hexham, and Egbert archbishop of York. Both these prelates were good scholars for the times in which they flourished, generous patrons of learning and learned men, and great collectors of books. Acca excelled in the knowledge of the rites and ceremonies of the church, and in church-music; both which branches of learning, then in the highest esteem, he acquired at Rome (54). Egbert, who was brother to Eadbert king of Northumberland, founded a noble library at York, for the advancement of learning. Alcuinus, who was his pupil, and the keeper of this library, speaks of it in several of his letters, as one of the most choice and valuable collections of books then in the world. In a letter to Eambald, a successor of Egbert in the see of York, he expresseth himself in this manner: ‘ I thank God, my most dear son, that I have lived to see your exaltation to the government of that church in which I was educated, and to the custody of that inestimable treasure of learning and wisdom which my beloved master archbishop Egbert left to his successors (55).’ ‘ O that I had (says he in a letter to the emperor Charlemagne) the use of those admirable books on all parts of learning which I enjoyed in my native country, collected by the industry of my beloved master Egbert. May it please your imperial Majesty, in your great wisdom, to permit me to send some of our youth to transcribe the most valuable books in that library, and thereby transplant the flowers of Britain into France (56).’ It may be some satisfaction to the learned reader to peruse the poetical catalogue of this ancient library, which he will find below (57).

Alcuinus,

(54) Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. 5. c. 20.

(55) W. Malmf. l. 1. c. 3.

(56) Id. ibid.

(57) *Alcuinus's Catalogue of Archbishop Egbert's library at York.*

Illic invenies veterum vestigia Patrum;

Quidquid habet pro se Latio Romanus in orbe,

Grecia vel quidquid transmissit clara Latinis:

Hæbraicus vel quod populus bibit imbresuperno,

Alcuinus, the writer of these epistles, flourished in the latter part of this century, and was very famous for his genius and erudition. He was born in the north of England, and educated at York, under the direction of archbishop Egbert, as we learn from his own letters, in which he frequently calls that great prelate his beloved master, and the clergy of York the companions of his youthful studies (58). As he survived venerable Bede about seventy years, it is hardly possible that he could have received any part of his education under him, as some writers of literary history have affirmed; and it is worthy of observation, that he never calls that great man his master, though he speaks of him with the highest veneration (59). It is not well known to what preferments he had attained in the church before he left England, though some say he was abbot of Canterbury (60). The occasion of his leaving his native country, was his being sent on an embassy by Offa king of Mercia, to the emperor Charlemagne, who contracted so great an esteem and friendship for him, that he earnestly solicited, and at length prevailed upon him to settle in his court, and

Cent.  
VIII.Life of  
Alcuinus.

Africa luciflvo vel quidquid lumine sparfit.  
 Quod Pater Hieronymus, quod fenfit Hilarius, atque  
 Ambroſius Præful, ſimul Auguſtinus, et ipſe  
 Sanctus Athanaſius, quod Oroſius edit avitus:  
 Quidquid Gregorius ſummus docet, et Leo Papa;  
 Baſilius quidquid, Fulgentius atque coruſcant,  
 Caſſiodorus item, Chryſoſtomus atque Johannes;  
 Quidquid et Athelmus docuit, quid Beda Magiſter,  
 Quæ Victorinus ſcripſere, Boetius; atque  
 Hiſtorici veteres, Pompeius, Plinius, ipſe  
 Acer Ariſtoteles, Rhetor atque Tullius ingens;  
 Quid quoque Sedulius, vel quid canit ipſe Juvencus,  
 Alcuinus, et Clemens, Proſper, Paulinus, Arator,  
 Quid Fortunatus, vel quid Lactantius edunt;  
 Quæ Maro Virgilius, Statius, Lucanus, et auctor  
 Artis grammaticæ, vel quid ſcripſere magiſtri;  
 Quid Probus atque Focas, Donatus, Prifcianuſve,  
 Servius, Euticius, Pompeius, Commenianus.  
 Invenies alios perplures, lector, ibidem  
 Egregios ſtudiis, arte et ſermone magiſtros,  
 Plurima qui claro ſcripſere volumina ſenſu;  
 Nomina ſed quorum præſenti in carmine ſcribi  
 Longius eſt viſum, quam plectri poſtulet uſus.

*Alcuinus de Pontificibus et Sanctis Eccleſiæ Ebor. apud Gale, t.*

*1. p. 730.*

(58) *Epistolæ Alcuini, apud Lectiones Antiquas Canisii, t. 2. p.*

*409.*

(59) *Bale de Script. Britan. cent. 2. c. 17.*

(60) *Biograph. Britan. art. Alcuinus.*

become



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become his preceptor in the sciences (61). Alcuinus accordingly instructed that great prince in rhetoric, logic, mathematics, and divinity; which rendered him one of his greatest favourites. 'He was treated with so much kindness and familiarity (says a cotemporary writer) by the emperor, that the other courtiers called him, by way of eminence,—*the emperor's delight* (62).' Charlemagne employed his learned favourite to write several books against the heretical opinions of Felix bishop of Urgel in Catalonia, and to defend the orthodox faith against that heresiarch, in the council of Francfort, A. D. 894; which he performed to the entire satisfaction of the emperor and council, and even to the conviction of Felix and his followers, who abandoned their errors (63). 'The emperor consulted chiefly with Alcuinus on all things relating to religion and learning, and, by his advice, did many great things for the advancement of both. An academy was established in the Imperial palace, over which Alcuinus presided, and in which the princes and prime nobility were educated; and other academies were established in the chief towns of Italy and France, at his instigation, and under his inspection (64). 'France (says one of our best writers of literary history) is indebted to Alcuinus for all the polite learning it boasted of in that and the following ages. The universities of Paris, Tours, Fulden, Soissons, and many others, owe to him their origin and increase; those of whom he was not the superior and founder, being at least enlightened by his doctrine and example, and enriched by the benefits he procured for them from Charlemagne (65).' After Alcuinus had spent many years in the most intimate familiarity with the greatest prince of his age, he at length, with great difficulty, obtained leave to retire from court to his abbey of St. Martin's at Tours. Here he kept up a constant correspondence by letters with Charlemagne; from which it appears, that both the emperor and his learned friend were animated with the most ardent love to learning and religion, and constantly employed in contriving and executing the noblest designs for their advancement (66). Some of these letters of Alcuinus (which are directed to Charlemagne, under the name of

(61). W. Malmf. l. 1. c. 3. (62) Murat. Antiq. t. 1. p. 131.

(63) Du Pin Hist. Eccl'es. cent. 8.

(64) Crevier Hist. Universit. de Paris, t. 1. p. 26, &c.

(65) Cave Hist. Literar. sec. 8. p. 486.

(66) Epistole Alcuini, apud Antiq. L'ecton. Canisii, t. 2.



king David, according to the custom of that age of giving scripture-names to princes) breathe so excellent a spirit, and throw so much light on the state of learning, that I cannot resist the inclination of laying one of them before the reader, in the following free translation, which I confess falls much short of the spirit and elegance of the original Latin :

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‘ To his most pious, excellent, and honoured Lord  
‘ king David,

‘ Flaccus Alcuinus wisheth everlasting health and  
‘ felicity in Christ.

Letter of  
Alcuinus  
to Charle-  
magne.

‘ The contemplation, O most excellent prince ! of  
‘ that pure and virtuous friendship with which you  
‘ honour me, fills my mind at all times with the most  
‘ abundant comfort ; and I cherish in my heart, as its  
‘ most precious treasure, the remembrance of your  
‘ goodness, and the image of that benign and gracious  
‘ countenance with which you entertain your friends.  
‘ In my retirement, it is the greatest joy of my life to  
‘ hear of your prosperity ; and therefore I have sent  
‘ this young gentleman to bring me an exact account  
‘ of your affairs, that I may have reason to sing the  
‘ loudest praises to my Lord Jesus Christ for your feli-  
‘ city. But why do I say that I may have reason ?—  
‘ the whole Christian world hath reason to praise Al-  
‘ mighty God, with one voice, that he hath raised up  
‘ so pious, wise, and just a prince, to govern and pro-  
‘ tect it in these most dangerous times ; a prince who  
‘ makes it the whole joy of his heart, and business of  
‘ his life, to suppress every thing that is evil, and pro-  
‘ mote every thing that is good ; to advance the glory  
‘ of God, and spread the knowledge of the Christian  
‘ religion into the most distant corners of the world.

‘ Persevere, O my most dear and amiable prince ! in  
‘ your most honourable course, in making the improve-  
‘ ment of your subjects in knowledge, virtue, and hap-  
‘ piness, the great object of your pursuit ; for this shall  
‘ redound to your glory and your felicity in the great  
‘ day of the Lord, and in the eternal society of his  
‘ saints. Such noble designs and glorious efforts, you  
‘ may depend upon it, shall not go unrewarded ; for  
‘ though the life of man is short, the goodness of God  
‘ is infinite, and he will recompense our momentary  
‘ toils with joys which shall never end. How precious  
‘ then is time ! and how careful should we be, that we do

‘ not

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‘ not lose by our indolence those immortal felicities which we may obtain by the active virtues of a good life !  
 ‘ The employments of your Alcuinus in his retreat are suited to his humble sphere ; but they are neither inglorious nor unprofitable. I spend my time in the halls of St. Martin, in teaching some of the noble youths under my care the intricacies of grammar, and inspiring them with a taste for the learning of the ancients ; in describing to others the order and revolutions of those shining orbs which adorn the azure vault of heaven ; and in explaining to others the mysteries of divine wisdom, which are contained in the holy scriptures ; suiting my instructions to the views and capacities of my scholars, that I may train up many to be ornaments to the church of God, and to the court of your Imperial majesty. In doing this I find a great want of several things, particularly of those excellent books in all arts and sciences which I enjoyed in my native country, through the expence and care of my great master Egbert. May it therefore please your majesty, animated with the most ardent love of learning, to permit me to send some of our young gentlemen into England, to procure for us those books which we want, and transplant the flowers of Britain into France, that their fragrance may no longer be confined to York, but may perfume the palaces of Tours.

‘ I need not put your majesty in mind, how earnestly we are exhorted in the holy scriptures to the pursuit of wisdom ; than which nothing is more conducive to a pleasant, happy, and honourable life ; nothing a greater preservative from vice ; nothing more becoming or more necessary to those especially who have the administration of public affairs, and the government of empires. Learning and wisdom exalt the low, and give additional lustre to the honours of the great. *By wisdom kings reign, and princes decree justice.* Cease not then, O most gracious king ! to press the young nobility of your court to the eager pursuit of wisdom and learning in their youth, that they may attain to an honourable old age, and a blessed immortality. For my own part, I will never cease, according to my abilities, to sow the seeds of learning in the minds of your subjects in these parts ; mindful of the saying of the wisest man, *In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand ; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that.* To do this  
 ‘ hath

‘ hath been the most delightful employment of my whole  
 ‘ life. In my youthful years I sowed the seeds of learn-  
 ‘ ing in the flourishing seminaries of my native soil of  
 ‘ Britain, and in my old age I am doing the same in  
 ‘ France; praying to God, that they may spring up and  
 ‘ flourish in both countries. I know also, O prince be-  
 ‘ loved of God, and praised by all good men! that you  
 ‘ exert all your influence in promoting the interests of  
 ‘ learning and religion; more noble in your actions  
 ‘ than in your royal birth. May the Lord Jesus Christ  
 ‘ preserve and prosper you in all your great designs, and  
 ‘ at length bring you to the enjoyment of celestial glo-  
 ‘ ry (67).”——How few princes enjoy the happiness of  
 such a correspondence, or have the wisdom and virtue  
 to encourage it!

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Alcuinus composed many treatises on a great variety of subjects, in a style much superior in purity and elegance to that of the generality of writers in the age in which he flourished (68). Charlemagne often solicited him, with all the warmth of a most affectionate friend, to return to court, and favour him with his company and advice; but he still excused himself; and nothing could draw him from his retirement in his abbey of St. Martin in Tours, where he died A. D. 804.

Though Beda and Alcuinus were unquestionably the brightest luminaries, not only of England, but of the Christian world, in the eighth century; yet there were some other natives of Britain who made no inconsiderable figure in the republic of letters in this period; and are therefore entitled to have their names at least preserved in the history of their country. Boniface, the first archbishop of Mentz, was a native of Britain; but whether of South or North Britain, is not agreed (69). He received his education in several English monasteries, and became famous for his genius and learning. Being ordained a priest in the first year of this century, he was soon after inspired with the zeal of propagating the gospel among those nations of Europe who were still Heathens. With this view, he left his native country A. D. 704, and travelled into Germany, where he spent about

Other  
learned  
men who  
flourished  
in Eng-  
land in this  
century.

(67) *Lectioes Antiq. Canif. t. 2.*

(68) *Biograph. Britan. in Alcuin.*

(69) *Cave Hist. Literar. p. 480. Mackenzie's Scotch Writers, p. 35.*

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fifty years in preaching the gospel with equal zeal and success, making many converts, and founding many churches. To encourage him in his labours, he was consecrated a bishop by pope Gregory II. A. D. 723, and appointed archbishop of Mentz A. D. 732 by Gregory III. Boniface being considered as the apostle of Germany, had great authority in all the churches of that country, and presided in several councils; but was at last barbarously murdered by some Pagans near Utrecht, June 5, A. D. 754, in the eighty-fourth year of his age. This active prelate, in the course of his long life, besides some other works, wrote a great number of letters, which have been collected and published by Serarius, and contain many curious things (70). Willibald, the nephew and follower of Boniface, was a man of learning, and wrote the life of his uncle (71). Eddius, a monk of Canterbury, who flourished in this century, was very famous for his skill in church-music, a science much esteemed and cultivated in those times, and wrote the life of Wilfred archbishop of York, which hath been published by Dr. Gale (72). Dungal and Clement, two Scotchmen, were very famous for their learning in the latter part of this century, and taught the sciences in Italy and France with much reputation, under the patronage of Charlemagne (73). But it would be improper to be more particular in our enumeration of the learned men of this century.

Sciences  
studied in  
this cen-  
tury.

The sciences commonly taught and studied in this age were few and imperfect. It seems to have been in this period that the famous division of the seven liberal arts or sciences into the *trivium* and *quadrivium* took place. The *trivium* comprehended grammar, rhetoric, and logic; the *quadrivium*, music, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy, according to the barbarous verses quoted below (74). John of Salisbury, who flourished in the twelfth century, speaks of this division of the sciences as of very great antiquity in his time. ‘The sciences are divided (says he) into the *trivii* and *quadrivii*; which

(70) Du Pin Eccles. Hist. cent. 8.

(71) Id. ibid.

(72) Scriptores xv. Histor. Britan. t. 1. p. 40.

(73) Murator. Antiq. t. 3. c. 815, &c.

(74) *Gramm.* loquitur, *Dia.* vera docet, *Rhet.* verba colorat, *Maj.* canit, *Ar.* numerat, *Geo.* ponderat, *Ast.* colit astra.

*Brucker Hist. Philosf. t. 3. p. 597.*



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‘ were so much admired by our ancestors in former  
 ‘ ages, that they imagined they comprehended all wis-  
 ‘ dom and learning, and were sufficient for the solution  
 ‘ of all questions, and the removing of all difficulties;  
 ‘ for whoever understood the *trivii* (grammar, rhetoric,  
 ‘ and logic) could explain all manner of books without  
 ‘ a teacher; but he who was further advanced, and com-  
 ‘ prehended also the *quadrivii* (music, arithmetic, geo-  
 ‘ metry, and astronomy), could answer all questions,  
 ‘ and unfold all the secrets of nature (75).’ How ancient  
 is the art of concealing ignorance under specious pre-  
 tences to knowledge! Natural and experimental philo-  
 sophy was totally neglected; nor were the foundations  
 and principles of morals any part of the study of the  
 learned in this period (76). The learned reader will find  
 a very curious poetical catalogue of the sciences taught  
 in the academy of York, in the work quoted below (77).

The narrow limits and very imperfect state of the sciences in this age were owing to various causes; but especially to the total neglect, or rather contempt, of learning, by the laity of all ranks; the greatest princes being, for the most part, quite illiterate. After what hath been said of the learning of Charlemagne, who was unquestionably the greatest monarch and wisest man of his age, it will no doubt surprise the reader to hear, that his education had been so much neglected, that he could not write, and that he was forty-five years of age when he began to study the sciences under Alcuinus (78). From this example, we may form some judgment of the education and learning, or rather ignorance, of the other princes and nobles of Europe in those times. Learning then being wholly in the hands of the clergy, and a very small portion of it being sufficient to enable them to perform the offices of the church with tolerable decency, few, very few of them, aspired to any more. Nor have we any reason to be surprised at this, when we consider the difficulty of procuring books and masters, and gaining even a smattering of the sciences; and that when it was gained, it contributed little to their credit, and nothing to their preferment, as there were so few who were capable of discerning literary merit, or disposed to reward it.

(75) Joan. Salif. Metalog. l. 1. c. 12.

(76) Bruckeri Hist. Philosoph. t. 3. p. 599.

(77) Alcuinus de Pontificibus et Sanctis Eccles. Ebor. apud Gale, p. 728.

(78) Eginhard. Vita Caroli Magni, c. 25.

## Cent. IX.

State of  
learning in  
the ninth  
century.

Learning, which had begun to decline in England about the middle of the eighth century, was almost quite extinguished in the beginning of the ninth; and that profound darkness which had been a little dissipated by the appearance of a few extraordinary men, as Aldhelm, Beda, Egbert, and Alcuinus, returned again, and resumed its dominion over the minds of men. Many of the monasteries, which were the only seats of learning, had by this time been destroyed, either by the Danes or by the civil wars, their libraries burnt, and the monks dispersed. This was particularly the case in the kingdom of Northumberland, where learning had flourished most, as we are informed by the following passages in the letters of Alcuinus, preserved by William of Malmesbury. To the clergy of York he writes:—‘ I call God to witness, that it was not the love of gold that carried me into France, or that detains me there; but the wretched and deplorable state of your church.’ To Offa king of Mercia:—‘ I was ready to return into my native country of Northumberland loaded with presents by Charlemagne; but upon the intelligence I have received, I think it better to remain where I am, than venture myself in a country where no man can enjoy security, or prosecute his studies. For, lo! their churches are demolished by the Pagans, their altars polluted with impiety, their monasteries defiled with adulteries, and the land wet with the blood of its nobles and princes (79).’ From hence it appears (says Malmesbury) how many calamities were brought upon England through the neglect of learning, and the other vices of its inhabitants. As the devastations of the Danes were gradually carried into all parts of England in the course of this century, the monasteries, and other seats of learning, were every where laid in the dust, and the very last glimmerings of literary knowledge almost quite extinguished. Of this we have the fullest evidence in the following passage of a letter of Alfred the Great, to Wulfsig, bishop of Worcester: ‘ At my accession to the throne (A. D. 871), all knowledge and learning was extinguished in the English nation: insomuch that there were very few to the south of the Humber who understood the common

(79) W. Malmf. l. i. c. 3.

‘ prayers of the church, or were capable of translating Cent. IX.  
 ‘ a single sentence of Latin into English; but to the  
 ‘ south of the Thames, I cannot recollect so much as  
 ‘ one who could do this (80).’ Another cotemporary  
 writer gives the following melancholy account of the  
 state of learning in this period: “ In our days, those  
 ‘ who discover any taste for learning, or desire of  
 ‘ knowledge, are become the objects of contempt and  
 ‘ hatred; their conduct is viewed with jealous eyes;  
 ‘ and if any blemish is detected in their behaviour, it  
 ‘ is imputed, not to the frailty of human nature, but  
 ‘ to the nature of their studies, and their affectation of  
 ‘ being wiser than their neighbours. By this means,  
 ‘ those few who have really a love to learning, are de-  
 ‘ terred from engaging in the noble pursuit, through the  
 ‘ dread of that reproach and ignominy to which it would  
 ‘ expose them (81).’

When learning was in this condition, we cannot ex- Life of  
 pect to meet with many learned men who merit a place John Scot.  
 in the annals of their country. Accordingly we do not  
 find above one or two among the people of this island  
 from the death of Alcuinus, A. D. 804, to the acces-  
 sion of Alfred, A. D. 871, who attained to any degree  
 of literary fame. The most learned man in Europe,  
 however, in this dark period, was a native of Britain,  
 and most probably of the town of Air in Scotland.  
 This was Johannes Scotus Erigena, so called from his  
 country, and the place of his birth; and surnamed the  
*Wise*, on account of his superior knowledge and erudi-  
 tion (82). This ingenious man, who was probably born  
 about the beginning of this century, seeing his own  
 country involved in great darkness and confusion, and  
 affording no means of acquiring that knowledge after  
 which he thirsted, travelled into foreign parts, and, if  
 we may believe some writers, into Greece, where he  
 acquired the knowledge of the Greek language and of  
 the Greek philosophy; which were very rare accom-  
 plishments in those times (83). ‘ In whatever manner  
 ‘ (says one of the best writers of literary history) he  
 ‘ acquired the knowledge of languages and philosophy,

(80) Spelman Vita Alfridi, append. 3. p. 196.

(81) Servati Lupi Epist. ad Egiharcum, lxx. 1.

(82) Mackenzie's Lives of Scots Writers, p. 49.

(83) Baleus de Script. Britan. p. 114.



Cent. IX. ' it is very certain that he had not only a very pleasant  
 ' and facetious, but also a very acute and penetrating  
 ' genius; - that in philosophy he had no superior, and in  
 ' languages no equal, in the age in which he flourish-  
 ' ed (84).' These uncommon accomplishments, toge-  
 ther with his wit and pleasantry, which rendered his  
 conversation as agreeable as it was instructive, procured  
 him an invitation from Charles the Bald, king of France,  
 the greatest patron of learning and learned men in that  
 age. Scotus accepted of this invitation, and lived several  
 years in the court of that great prince, on a footing  
 of the most intimate friendship and familiarity, sleeping  
 often in the royal apartment, and dining daily at the  
 royal table. We may judge of the freedom which he  
 used with Charles, by the following repartee, preserved  
 by one of our ancient historians. As the king and  
 Scotus were sitting one day at table opposite to each  
 other, after dinner, drinking a cheerful glass, the philo-  
 sopher having said something that was not quite agree-  
 able to the rules of French politeness, the king, in a  
 merry humour, asked him, Pray what is between a Scot  
 and a sot? To which he answered, Nothing but the  
 table (85). The king, says the historian, laughed heartily,  
 and was not in the least offended, as he made it a rule never  
 to be angry with his master, as he always called Scotus.  
 But Charles valued this great man for his wisdom and  
 learning still more than for his wit, and retained him  
 about his person, not only as an agreeable companion,  
 but as his preceptor in the sciences, and his best coun-  
 sellor in the most arduous affairs of government. At the  
 desire of his royal friend and patron, Scotus composed  
 several works while he resided in the court of France;  
 which procured him many admirers on the one hand,  
 and many adversaries on the other; especially among  
 the clergy, to whom his notions on several subjects did  
 not appear perfectly orthodox. His books on predestina-  
 tion and the eucharist in particular were supposed to con-  
 tain many bold and dangerous positions; and a crowd of  
 angry monks and others wrote against them (86). While  
 he was engaged in these disputes, an incident happened  
 which drew upon him the displeasure of the sovereign

(84) Bruckeri Hist. Philosoph. t. 3. p. 615.

(85) Hoveden Annal. ad an. 866.

(86) Bruckeri Hist. Philosoph. t. 3. p. 616.



pontiff. Michael Balbus, the Greek emperor, had sent Cent. IX  
 a copy of the works of Dionysius the philosopher to the  
 emperor Lewis the Pious, A. D. 824, as a most valuable  
 present. This was esteemed an inestimable treasure in  
 France, because it was ignorantly believed to be the  
 work of Dionysius the Areopagite, the pretended apostle  
 of the French; but being in Greek, it was quite unin-  
 telligible. Charles the Bald, the son and successor of  
 Lewis, desirous of perusing this work, employed his  
 friend Scotus to translate it into Latin; which he under-  
 took, and accomplished, without consulting the pope.  
 This, with the former suspicions of his heterodoxy, gave  
 so great offence to his holiness, that he wrote a very  
 angry letter to the king of France, requesting, or rather  
 commanding him, to send Scotus to Rome, to undergo  
 a trial. ‘I have been informed (says the pope in his  
 letter) that one John, a Scotchman by birth, hath  
 lately translated into Latin the work of Dionysius the  
 Areopagite, concerning the divine names and the celest-  
 tial hierarchy, which he should have sent to me for my  
 approbation, according to custom. This was the more  
 necessary, because the said John, though a man of  
 great learning, is reported not to think rightly in some  
 things (87).’ But Charles had too great an affection  
 for his learned and agreeable companion to trust him in  
 the hands of the incensed pontiff. The most capital  
 work of this John Scot was his book concerning the  
 nature of things, or the division of natures; which,  
 after lying long in MS. was at length published by Dr.  
 Thomas Gale. This was in several respects the most  
 curious literary production of that age, being written  
 with a metaphysical subtlety and acuteness then unknown  
 in Europe. This acuteness Scotus had acquired by read-  
 ing the writings of the Greek philosophers; and by his  
 using the subtleties and refinements of logic in the dis-  
 cussion of theological subjects, he became the father of  
 that scholastic divinity, which made so distinguished a  
 figure in the middle ages, and maintained its ground so  
 long. The criticism of one of our ancient historians on  
 this work is not unjust. ‘His book, intitled, *The*  
*Division of Natures*, is of great use in solving many in-  
 tricate and perplexing questions; if we can forgive

(87) Aub. Miræus ad Gemblacen. c. 93. p. 104.

Cent. IX. ‘ him for deviating from the path of the Latin philosophers and divines, and pursuing that of the Greeks. ‘ It was this that made him appear a heretic to many; ‘ and it must be confessed, that there are many things ‘ in it which, at first sight at least, seem to be contrary ‘ to the Catholic faith (88).’ Of this kind are his opinions about God and the universe; which have evidently too great a resemblance to the pantheism of Spinoza. Scotus was not free from that learned vanity which makes men delight in such paradoxes as are commonly no better than impious or ridiculous absurdities. The following short quotations from this work will abundantly justify these strictures. ‘ All things are God, and ‘ God is all things. When we say that God created all ‘ things, we mean only, that God is in all things, and ‘ that he is the essence of all things, by which they exist. ‘ The universe is both eternal and created, and neither ‘ did its eternity precede its creation, nor its creation ‘ precede its eternity (89).’ The philosophical and theological system of Scotus appears to have been this in a few words: ‘ That the universe, and all things which ‘ it comprehends, were not only virtually, but essentially ‘ in God; and that they flowed from him from eternity; ‘ and shall, at the consummation of all things, be resolved again into him, as into their great fountain and ‘ origin. After the resurrection (says he), nature, and ‘ all its causes, shall be resolved into God, and then ‘ nothing shall exist but God alone (90).’ These opinions were far enough from being agreeable to the Catholic faith; and therefore we need not be surprised to hear, that the pope Honorius III. published a bull, commanding all the copies of this book that could be found, to be sent to Rome, in order to be burnt; ‘ because (says his ‘ holiness) it is quite full of the worms of heretical pravity (91).’ The concluding scene of the history of this learned and ingenious man is involved in darkness and uncertainty. Some English historians affirm, that after the death of his great patron Charles the Bald, he came over into England, at the invitation of Alfred the Great; that he

(88) Hoveden Annal. ad ann. 883.

(89) Jo. Scoti Erigenæ de Divisione Nature, libri quinque, p. 42. 2<sup>o</sup> l. 128.

(90) Jo. Scoti Erigenæ de Divisione Nature, libri quinque, p. 232.

(91) Alberic. Chron. ad ann. 1225.

taught some time in the university of Oxford; from whence he retired to the abbey of Malmfbury, where he was murdered by his scholars with their penknives (92). But these writers seem to have confounded John Scot Erigena with another John Scot, who was an Englishman, cotemporary with Alfred, taught at Oxford, and was slain by the monks of the abbey of Ethelinge, of which he was abbot (93). It is most probable that Erigena ended his days in France (94).

The reign of Alfred the Great, from A. D. 871 to A. D. 901, is a most memorable period in the annals of learning, and affords more materials for literary history than two or three centuries either before or after, shining with all the warmth and lustre of the brightest day of summer, amidst the gloom of a long, dark, and stormy winter. Every friend to learning, and the improvement of the human mind, must wish to see the literary merits of this excellent prince set in a fair and just light, for the honour of human nature, and an example to all succeeding princes.

History of  
learning in  
the reign  
of Alfred  
the Great.

Alfred the Great appeared at a time, and in circumstances, the most unfavourable that can be conceived for the acquisition of knowledge, being born when his country was involved in the most profound darkness and deplorable confusion, when the small remains of science that were left were wholly confined to cloisters, and learning was considered rather as a reproach than an honour to a prince. Accordingly we find that his education was totally neglected in this respect: and though he was carefully instructed in the art of hunting, in which he attained to great dexterity, he was not taught to know one letter from another till he was above twelve years of age; when a book was put into his hand by a kind of accident, rather than any formed design. The queen, his mother, one day being in company with her four sons, of which Alfred was the youngest, and having a book of Saxon poems in her hand, beautifully written and illuminated, observed, that the royal youths were charmed with the beauty of the book; upon which she said,—‘I will make a present of this book to him who shall learn to read it soonest.’ Alfred immediately

Literary  
history of  
Alfred.

(92) W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 4. Hoveden Annal. ad ann. 866.

(93) Assenus in Vita Alfredi.

(94) Histoire Literaire de la France, Siecle 9.

Cent. IX. took fire, and applied to learn to read with such ardour, that in a very little time he both read and repeated the poem to the queen, and received it for his reward (95). From that moment he was seized with an insatiable thirst for knowledge, and reading and study became his chief delight. But still he met with great difficulties in the prosecution of his studies for want of proper helps. ‘ I have heard him (says Asferius) lament it with many sighs, as the greatest misfortune of his life, that when he was young, and had leisure for study, he could not find masters to instruct him; because at that time there were few or none among the West-Saxons who had any learning, or could so much as read with propriety and ease (96).’ For some years before, and several years after his accession to the throne, he was so incessantly engaged in wars against the Danes, and in other affairs of state, that he had but little time for study; but of that little he did not lose a moment, carrying a book continually in his bosom, to which he applied whenever he had an opportunity (97). When he was advanced in life, and had restored the tranquillity of his country by the submission of the Danes, he was so far from relaxing, that he redoubled his efforts to improve his mind in knowledge, devoting a considerable portion of his time to study, and employing all his leisure-hours in reading, or hearing others read (98). By this incessant application to study, this excellent prince became one of the greatest scholars of the age in which he flourished. He is said to have spoken the Latin language with as much ease and fluency as his native tongue, and understood, but did not speak Greek. He was an eloquent orator, an acute philosopher, an excellent historian, mathematician, musician, and architect, and the prince of the Saxon poets (99).

Invited  
learned  
men to  
his court.

Alfred did not prosecute his studies with all this ardour merely as a private man, and for his own improvement only, but as a great prince, and for the improvement of his subjects, whose ignorance he viewed with much compassion. Conscious that the revival of learn-

(95) Asfer. de A'fredi Rebus gestis, p. 5. edit. a Camden.

(96) Id. ibid.

(97) Id. ibid.

(98) Id. ibid.

(99) W. Westm. A. D. 871. Ingulf. p. 28. W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 4.



ing in a country where it was quite extinct, was too Cent. IX.  
arduous a task even for the greatest monarch, without assistance, he was at great pains to find out learned men in other countries, whom he invited to settle in his court and kingdom. Those who accepted his invitations, he received in the kindest manner, treated with the most engaging familiarity, and loaded with the greatest favours. Some of these learned men he kept about his own person, as the companions of his studies, and to assist him in the instruction of his own sons, and of the sons of his nobility, who were educated with them in his palace; while he stationed others of them in those places where they might be most useful (100). As these scholars, though in a humbler station, were the associates of the illustrious Alfred in the revival of learning, they merit our grateful remembrance in this place.

After, a monk of St. David's in Wales, was one of Life of  
Alfred's greatest favourites, and wrote his life, to which After.  
we are chiefly indebted for our knowledge of the actions and character of this great prince. Alfred having heard this monk much celebrated for his learning, invited him to his court; and was so charmed with his conversation at the first interview, that he earnestly pressed him to come and live constantly with him. To this the monk, not being his own master, could not agree; but at length, with the consent of his monastery, it was settled, that he should spend one half of every year at St. David's, and the other at the court of England; where he employed much of his time in reading with the king, who rewarded him with three rich abbeys, and many noble presents (101).

Grimbald, a monk of Rheims in France, was another Grimbald,  
of the learned men whom Alfred invited to his court, to &c.  
assist him in his own studies, and in reviving the study of letters among his subjects. This monk was particularly famous for his theological and ecclesiastical learning, and his skill in church-music; which rendered him a valuable acquisition to Alfred, and a useful instrument in promoting his designs for the restoration of learning, as we shall see by and by (102). He procured another learned man from Old Saxony on the continent, who

(100) After. de Alfredi Rebus gestis, p. 5. edit. a Camden.

(101) Id. p. 15.

(102) Id. p. 14.

Cent. IX. was named *John Scot*, and is by many writers confounded with John Scot Erigena, though he was evidently a different person (103). Plegmund archbishop of Canterbury, Wenefred bishop of Worcester, Dunwulph bishop of Winchester, Wulfsig and Ethelstan bishops of London, and Werebert bishop of Chester, were among the learned men who assisted Alfred in his studies, and in promoting the interests of learning among his subjects (104).

Works of  
Alfred.


By the assistance of these ingenious men, and his own indefatigable application, Alfred acquired a very uncommon degree of erudition; which he employed, like a great and good prince, in composing some original works, and translating others out of Latin into Saxon, for the instruction of his people. The most perfect catalogue, both of the original works and translations of this excellent prince, may be found in the work quoted below (105); but is too long to be here inserted. The motives which prompted Alfred to translate some books out of Latin into Saxon; and the methods which he used in making and publishing the translations, are communicated to us by himself, in his preface to one of them: ‘When I considered with myself, how much the  
 ‘ knowledge of the Latin tongue was decayed in Eng-  
 ‘ land, though many could read their native language  
 ‘ well enough, I began, amidst all the hurry and mul-  
 ‘ tiplicity of my affairs, to translate this book (the pasto-  
 ‘ ral of St. Gregory) out of Latin into English, in some  
 ‘ places very literally, in others more freely; as I had  
 ‘ been taught by Plegmund my archbishop, and Asler  
 ‘ my bishop, and Grimbald and John my priests. When  
 ‘ I had learned, by their instructions, to comprehend  
 ‘ the sense of the original clearly, I translated it, I say,  
 ‘ and sent a copy of my translation to every bishop’s seat  
 ‘ in my kingdom, with an ætal or handle worth fifty  
 ‘ mancusses, charging all men, in the name of God,  
 ‘ neither to separate the book from the handle, nor re-  
 ‘ move it out of the church; because I did not know  
 ‘ how long we might enjoy the happiness of having such  
 ‘ learned prelates as we have at present (106).’ There

(103) Ingulf. Hist.

(104) Spelman, Life of Alfred, p. 127, 128.

(105) Biographia Britan. vol. i. p. 54, 55.

(106) Spelman, Vita Alfredi, Appendix. No. 3. p. 197.

can be no doubt that Alfred had the same views, and Cent. IX. proceeded in the same manner, in making and publishing his other translations. 

At the accession of Alfred the Great, all the seminaries of learning in England were laid in ashes. These were the monasteries and bishops seats where schools had been kept for the education of youth, chiefly for the church, which were so universally destroyed by the Danes, that hardly one of them was left standing. This great prince, sensible how impossible it was to revive learning, without providing schools for the education of youth, repaired the old monasteries, and built new ones, instituting a school in each of them for that purpose (107). But in these monastic and episcopal schools, both in England and in other countries of Europe, the youth were only taught reading, writing, the Latin language, and church-music, to fit them for performing the public offices of the church; except in a very few, where some were taught arithmetic, to enable them to manage the secular affairs of their societies, and others instructed in rhetoric and theology, to assist them in declaiming to the people (108). Though these schools prevented the total extinction of literary knowledge among the Christian clergy in those dark times, they contributed very little to the improvement of the sciences, or the diffusing of learning among the laity, who were left almost entirely without the means of acquiring any degree of literature.

When Alfred the Great, therefore, formed the noble design of rendering learning both more perfect and more general, he was under a necessity of instituting schools on a different and more extensive plan; in which all the sciences that were then known should be taught by the best masters that could be procured, to the laity as well as to the clergy. This great prince, having formed the idea of such a school, was very happy in the choice of a place for its establishment, fixing on that auspicious spot where the university of Oxford, one of the most illustrious seats of learning in the world, now stands. Whether he was determined to make this choice by its having been a seat of learning in former times, by the natural amenity of the place, or by its convenient situa-

The university of Oxford founded.

(107) Spelman. Vita Alfredi, Append. No. 3. p. 106.

(108) Conring. de Antiquit. Academ. p. 67, 68.

Cent. IX.

tion, almost in the centre of his dominions, we have not leisure to inquire, as it would lead us into several tedious and doubtful disquisitions. Being surrounded by a considerable number of learned men, collected from different countries, he justly thought, that they could not be better employed than in instructing the rising generation in divine and human learning. In order to enable them to do this with the greater success, he provided suitable accommodations for them and their scholars, at Oxford, though, at this distance of time, it cannot be discovered with certainty what these accommodations and endowments were. The following account of the schools founded at Oxford by Alfred the Great is given by John Rouse, the antiquarian of Warwick, who flourished in the fifteenth century; to which our readers may give that degree of credit which they think it merits. ‘At the first founding of the university of Oxford, the noble king Alfred built three halls in the name of the Holy Trinity, for the doctors in grammar, philosophy, and divinity. The first of these halls was situated in High-street, near the east gate of the city, and endowed with a sufficient maintenance for twenty-six grammarians. This was called *Little-hall*, on account of the inferiority of the science there studied; and it still retains that name even in my time. the second was built near the north wall of the city, in the street now called *School-street*, and endowed for twenty-six logicians or philosophers, and had the name of *Less-hall*. The third was built also in High-street, contiguous to Little-hall, and was endowed for twenty-six divines, for the study of the holy scriptures (109).’ This account, some may think, is corroborated by the following passage of the old annals of the monastery of Winchester, which hath also preserved the names of the first professors in this celebrated seat of learning, after its foundation or restoration by king Alfred. ‘In the year of our Lord 886, in the second year of St. Grimbald’s coming over into England, the university of Oxford was founded. The first regents there, and readers in divinity, were St. Neot, an abbot and eminent professor of theology, and St. Grimbald, an eloquent and most excellent interpreter of the holy scrip-

(109) J. Ross. Hist. Regum Angl. p. 77, -8.

‘ tures.




' tures. Grammar and rhetoric were taught by Affe-Cent. IX.  
 ' rius, a monk, a man of extraordinary learning. Logic, }  
 ' music, and arithmetic, were read by John, a monk  
 ' of St. David's. Geometry and astronomy were pro-  
 ' fessed by John, a monk and colleague of St. Grimbald,  
 ' a man of sharp wit, and immense knowledge. These  
 ' lectures were often honoured with the presence of the  
 ' most illustrious and invincible monarch king Alfred,  
 ' whose memory to every judicious taste shall be always  
 ' sweeter than honey (110).' For the support of the  
 masters and scholars, in these and the other schools  
 which he established, Alfred allotted one eighth part  
 of his whole revenue (111). It seems to have been in  
 these newly-erected schools at Oxford, that their illustri-  
 ous founder settled his youngest son Æthelweard, with  
 the sons of his nobility and others, for their education;  
 of which Asserius, a cotemporary writer, and one of the  
 professors above mentioned, gives the following account:  
 ' He placed Æthelweard, his youngest son, who was  
 ' fond of learning, together with the sons of his nobi-  
 ' lity, and of many persons of inferior rank, in schools  
 ' which he had established with great wisdom and fore-  
 ' sight, and provided with able masters. In these schools  
 ' the youth were instructed in reading and writing both  
 ' the Saxon and Latin languages, and in other liberal  
 ' arts, before they arrived at sufficient strength of  
 ' body for hunting, and other manly exercises be-  
 ' coming their rank (112).' It is at least certain, from  
 what follows immediately after in Asserius, that the  
 schools in which Æthelweard and his fellow-students  
 were placed were different from those in which his two  
 elder brothers Edward and Elfthryth were educated,  
 which were in the king's court (113). There is another  
 passage in Asserius, as published by Camden, relating to  
 the university of Oxford, which hath been the occasion  
 of much controversy, some writers contending for its  
 authenticity, and others affirming that it hath been in-  
 terpolated. After examining the arguments on both  
 sides of this question, which are too tedious to be here  
 inserted, I cannot help suspecting the genuineness of  
 this passage; but as I dare not positively pronounce it

(110) Camd. Britan. t. 1. c. 304.

(111) Asser. Vita Alfredi. edit. a Camd. p. 20.

(112) Id. 13.

(113) Id. ibid.

Cent. IX.  spurious, I shall lay it before the reader. ‘ The same  
 ‘ year (886) there arose a great dissension at Oxford,  
 ‘ between Grimbold and the learned men which he  
 ‘ brought with him, and the old scholars which he found  
 ‘ there, who refused to comply with the laws and forms  
 ‘ of reading prescribed by Grimbold. For about three  
 ‘ years this difference occasioned only a private grudge,  
 ‘ which made no great noise; but at length it broke out  
 ‘ with great violence. The invincible king Alfred,  
 ‘ being informed of this by a message and complaint  
 ‘ from Grimbold, hastened to Oxford to put an end to  
 ‘ these disputes, and heard both parties with great pa-  
 ‘ tience. The old scholars pleaded in their own defence,  
 ‘ that before Grimbold came to Oxford, learning flourish-  
 ‘ ed there, though the students were not so numerous as  
 ‘ they had formerly been, many of them having been  
 ‘ expelled by the cruelties of the Pagans. They fur-  
 ‘ ther affirmed, and proved by the undoubted testimony  
 ‘ of ancient annals, that the laws and statutes of that  
 ‘ place had been established by men of great piety and  
 ‘ learning, as Gildas, Melkin, Nennius, Kentigern, and  
 ‘ others, who had taught there in their old age, and had  
 ‘ managed all things with great tranquillity and good  
 ‘ order; and that when St. Germanus came into Britain  
 ‘ to preach against the Pelagian heresy, he resided six  
 ‘ months at Oxford, and greatly approved of its laws  
 ‘ and institutions. The king having heard both  
 ‘ parties with incredible patience and humility, and  
 ‘ having earnestly exhorted them to lay aside their dis-  
 ‘ putes, and live in peace and concord, left them in  
 ‘ hopes that they would comply with his admonitions.  
 ‘ But Grimbold, not satisfied with this, retired to the  
 ‘ new monastery at Winchester, which king Alfred had  
 ‘ lately founded, and soon after had his tomb brought  
 ‘ thither also, which he had originally set up in a vault  
 ‘ under the chancel in the church of St. Peter at Oxford;  
 ‘ which church he had built from the foundation with  
 ‘ stones polished with great art (114).’ In a word, if  
 Oxford had been a seat of learning in more ancient  
 times, which it is certainly very difficult either to prove  
 or disprove, it appears to have been so entirely ruined,  
 together with all the other seminaries of learning in

England, in the beginning of king Alfred's reign, that Cent. IX.  
 this great prince may be justly styled the father and  
 founder of the university of Oxford: a circumstance  
 equally honourable to his memory and to this famous  
 seat of learning!

When Alfred the Great had thus founded and endow- Revival of learning.  
 ed schools, and provided them with proper masters, he  
 next endeavoured to fill them with suitable scholars;  
 which was not the easiest part of his work in that rude  
 age, when learning was held in such contempt, espe-  
 cially by the nobility. This illiberal and barbarous con-  
 tempt of letters, he effectually destroyed in a little time,  
 —by his own example,—by speaking on all occasions in  
 praise of learning,—and by making it the great road to  
 preferment, both in church and state (115). Still fur-  
 ther to diffuse a taste for knowledge, and to transmit it  
 to posterity, he made a law, obliging all freeholders who  
 possessed two hides of land, or upwards, to send their  
 sons to school, and give them a liberal education (116).  
 By these wise measures, this most excellent prince made  
 a total change in the sentiments of his subjects. The  
 old nobility bewailed their unhappiness in being ignorant  
 of letters, and some of them applied to study in a very  
 advanced age; while all took care to send their sons,  
 and young relations, to those schools provided for them  
 by the wisdom and munificence of their sovereign (117).  
 In a word, learning revived and flourished to such a de-  
 gree, in the course of Alfred's reign, that before the  
 end of it he could boast, that all his bishops sees were  
 filled by prelates of great learning, and every pulpit in  
 England furnished with a good preacher. So astonish-  
 ing are the effects which a great and good prince, ani-  
 mated with an ardent zeal for the happiness of his sub-  
 jects, can produce, not only in the circumstances, but  
 in the very spirit and character of a nation!

That gleam of light which appeared in England Cent. X.  
 towards the conclusion of the ninth century, was not of  
 long continuance; for as this was chiefly owing to the State of learning in the tenth century.  
 extraordinary genius and prodigious efforts of Alfred the  
 Great, as soon as these were removed by the death of  
 that prince, in the first year of the tenth century, learn-  
 ing began to languish and decline. Edward, his eldest

(115) W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 4.

(116) Abbas Rievallenfis.

(117) Afler. Vita Alfredi, p. 21.

Cent. X. son and successor, had been educated with great care; but not having the same genius and taste for study with his illustrious father, he did not prove so great a patron of learning and learned men (118). The Danes, too, those destructive enemies of science and civility, no sooner heard of the death of Alfred, than they renewed their ravages; which they continued, with little interruption, for many years. Besides this, the learned men collected by Alfred from different countries, dying soon after their royal patron, were not succeeded by men of equal learning. These, and several other unfavourable circumstances, gave a fatal check to the liberal and studious spirit which had been excited in the late reign; and the English by degrees relapsed into their former ignorance and contempt of learning. In this indeed they were far from being singular at this period; for all the nations of Europe were involved in such profound darkness during the whole course of the tenth century, that the writers of literary history are at a loss for words to paint the ignorance, stupidity, and barbarism of that age (119). ‘We now enter (says one) on the history of an age, which, for its barbarism and wickedness, may be called the age of iron; for its dullness and stupidity, the age of lead; and for its blindness and ignorance, the age of darkness (120).’ ‘The tenth century (says another) is commonly and justly called the unhappy age; for it was almost quite destitute of men of genius and learning, had few great princes or good prelates, and hardly any thing was performed in it that merits the attention of posterity (121).’ The many gross errors, and wretched superstitions, that were either introduced or established in the course of this century, such as,—transubstantiation,—the adoration of images and relics,—the baptism of bells,—the belief of the most childish stories of visions, apparitions, and miracles,—the celibacy of the clergy,—trials by fire and water ordeals, &c. &c. were sufficient proofs of its ignorance and stupidity. The popes who governed the church of Rome in this century, were for the most part the vilest miscreants that ever disgraced human nature;

(118) W. Malms. l. 2. c. 5. Hoveden, pars prior.

(119) Cave, Hist. Literar. p. 570. Brucker, Hist. Philosoph. t. 5. p. 632.

(120) Baron. Annal. ad an. 950.

(121) Gensbrad, p. 552.



and that city, where letters had hitherto been cultivated in some degree, now became a scene of such deplorable ignorance, as well as wickedness, that a cotemporary writer cries out, ‘ O miserable Rome! thou that formerly didst hold out so many great and glorious luminaries to our ancestors, into what prodigious darkness art thou now fallen, which will render thee infamous to all succeeding ages (122)?’ The clergy in this age were almost as illiterate as the laity. Some who filled the highest stations in the church could not so much as read; while others, who pretended to be better scholars, and attempted to perform the public offices, committed the most egregious blunders; of which the reader will find one example, out of many, quoted below (123).

When this was the melancholy state of letters in all the nations of Europe, it cannot be supposed that England will furnish us with many valuable materials for literary history in this age. It must, however, be observed, that the decline of learning in this island, after the death of Alfred, was gradual, and that it required a considerable time to destroy all the effects of his labours for its advancement. Besides, though his son Edward, and his grandson Athelstan, were very far inferior to him in learning, and in their efforts for its support; yet they had not so entirely forgotten his precepts and example as to be quite indifferent to its interests. On the contrary, they were not only the bravest, but the most intelligent princes of their age, and the greatest patrons of learning.

Edward, if we may believe some of our ancient historians, was the founder or restorer of the university of Cambridge, as his father had been of Oxford. ‘ Edward, surnamed the *Elder*, succeeded his father Alfred the Great; and though he was not equal to him in learning, yet he loved learned men, and advanced them to ecclesiastical dignities, according to their merits. For the further encouragement of learning, he raised Cambridge, as his father had done Oxford, to its former glory, after it had been long in ruins, with

Cent. X.

In England.

University of Cambridge.

(122) Arnoldus Orléanensis, apud Du Pin, Hist. Eccl. cent. 10.

(123) Meinwerc bishop of Paderborn, in this century, in reading the public prayers, used to say,—“ Benedic Domine regibus et regnis multis et mulabis tuis;”—instead of famulis et famulabibus: which made it a very ludicrous petition.

Cent. X. ‘ all the other ancient seminaries of learning; and, like  
 ‘ a generous friend and patron of the clergy, he com-  
 ‘ manded halls for the teachers and students to be built  
 ‘ there at his own expence. To render this institution  
 ‘ complete, he invited teachers of the liberal arts, and  
 ‘ doctors in theology, from Oxford, and settled them at  
 ‘ Cambridge. Thus far Thomas Rodburn, in his chro-  
 ‘ nicle. But I have seen a more full and authentic re-  
 ‘ presentation of this in a certain ancient painting in the  
 ‘ abbey of Hyde, at Winchester, which was sent to me,  
 ‘ and is still in my possession (124).’—If the above  
 account of the restoration of schools of learning at Cam-  
 bridge, by Edward the Elder, is true, which I shall not  
 take upon me either to affirm or deny, these schools, to-  
 gether with the city of Cambridge, were once more  
 ruined by the Danes A. D. 1010, and do not seem to  
 have been restored again till after the conclusion of the  
 period we are now delineating (125). Edward gave  
 another proof of his regard to learning, by bestowing a  
 very liberal education on his five sons and nine daugh-  
 ters, who excelled all the princes and princesses of their  
 age in literary accomplishments. Ethelward, his second  
 son, in particular, greatly resembled his illustrious grand-  
 father in genius and love of learning, as well as in his  
 person; but unhappily died young (126). Athelstan, the  
 eldest son and successor of Edward, was a prince of un-  
 common learning for the age in which he lived. William  
 of Malmesbury tells us, that a few days before he wrote  
 the history of this king, he had read an old book written  
 in his reign, that contained so flaming a panegyric on his  
 extraordinary learning, that he did not think fit to insert  
 it in his work; because he suspected it was wrought up  
 by the author beyond the truth, in order to gain the fa-  
 vour of Athelstan (127): a suspicion which perhaps was  
 not well founded. It appears from his laws, that this  
 king was a friend to learning and learned men; by one of  
 which it is decreed, ‘ that if any man make such profi-  
 ‘ ciency in learning as to obtain priest’s orders, he shall  
 ‘ enjoy all the honours and privileges of a thane (128).’  
 If it be true, that this prince employed certain learned

(124) J. Rossi Hist. Reg. Ang. p. 96.

(125) Chron. Saxon. p. 140.

(126) W. Malm. l. 2. c. 5.

(127) Id. ibid. p. 6.

(128) Spelman Concil. t. 1. p. 456.

Jews, who then resided in England, to translate the Old Testament out of Hebrew into English, that is a further proof of his attention both to learning and religion (129). It must after all be confessed, that the efforts of Edward and Athelstan, for the support of learning, were not very successful; for we meet with none who flourished under their government, so famous for their erudition as to merit a place in this work.

The reigns of several succeeding kings were equally unfortunate in this respect; and England by degrees sunk into the same profound darkness and ignorance with the other nations of Europe. Some of our monkish historians, it is true, speak in the highest strains of the prodigious learning of their great champion St. Dunstan. ‘He excelled (says one of them) as much in learning as he did in piety; and by his prodigious diligence, and the amazing genius that God had bestowed upon him, he easily acquired, and he long retained, all kinds of knowledge; so that in a little time he became equal in learning to his teachers, and far superior to all his fellow-scholars. So acute was his reason, so lively his imagination, and so admirable his elocution, that no man ever conceived things with greater quickness, expressed them with greater elegance, nor pronounced them with greater sweetness (130).’—‘At this time (says another) England was enlightened with many bright luminaries, like so many stars from heaven; among whom St. Dunstan shone with superior lustre, and was, next to king Alfred, the greatest promoter of learning that ever appeared in this island (131).’ But little credit can be given to these encomiums; for it became a kind of fashion among the English monks in the middle ages, to heap all the praises on their patron Dunstan that their imaginations could invent, without any regard to truth or probability. We are gravely told,—‘That in the days of St. Dunstan, all men worshipped God with fervour and sincerity; that the earth itself rejoiced, and the fields rewarded the labours of the husbandman with the most abundant harvests; that all the elements smiled, and the face of heaven was never obscured with clouds; that there were no such things as fear, discord, oppression, or murder, but that all men lived in

St. Dunstan celebrated for his learning by the monks.

(129) Bal. de Script. Brit. p. 127.

(130) Osborn Vita Dunstan. p. 93. (131) W. Malmf. l. 2 c. 8.

‘perfect

**Cent. X.** ‘ perfect virtue and profound tranquillity ; and that all those felicities flowed from the blessed St. Dunstan ; for which, as well as for his miracles, he was loaded with glory (132).’ A picture very different from the real history of those times.

**Decline of learning.** After the death of Edgar the Peaceable, A. D. 975, England became a scene of great confusion and misery for many years, through the increasing power and spreading devastations of the Danes. In these circumstances learning could not flourish ; but, on the contrary, was almost entirely ruined, together with its two most famous seminaries, Oxford and Cambridge, which were reduced to ashes by those barbarians (133).

**Life of Elfric the grammarian.** Elfric the grammarian is the only man who flourished in England in the end of the tenth and beginning of the eleventh century, that merits a place in this work on account of his erudition. This learned man, and voluminous writer, whose history is very much perplexed, was born about the middle of the tenth century, and educated under Ethelwold bishop of Winchester, who is said to have taken great pleasure in teaching youth the rules of grammar, and the art of translating Latin books into English (134). While Elfric was still a young man, and only in the station of a private monk, he was famous for his learning, as appears from a letter of his to Wulfen bishop of Sherburn, prefixed to a set of canons, or rather an episcopal charge, which he had drawn up at the request and for the use of that prelate, who was probably not equal to a work of that kind himself (135). Being sent by Elphegus bishop of Winchester, A. D. 987, to the monastery of Cerne in Dorsetshire, then newly founded, he there composed his grammar of the Latin tongue, which procured him the title of *the Grammarian*, and translated out of Latin into Saxon no fewer than eighty sermons or homilies for the use of the English clergy (136). These homilies are still extant in MS. in two volumes folio ; and are well described by Mr. Wanley in his catalogue of Saxon books (137). Elfric composed several other works ; which procured him so great a reputation for learning, that he was on that account advanced, by degrees, to the archiepiscopal dignity.

(133) W. Malmf. de Gestis Pontificum Anglor. p. 115.

(133) Chron. Saxon. p. 139, 140.


(134) Anglia Sacra, t. 1. p. 130.

(135) Spal. Concil. t. 1. p. 572. Anglia Sacra, t. 1. p. 130.

(136) Id. ibid.

(137) Hickesii Thesaur. t. 2. p. 1.



While learning was thus gradually declining through- Cent. X.  
out all the kingdoms of Europe, in the ninth and tenth   
centuries, the light of science began to spring up in the East, among the Persians and Arabians; and the posterity of those fierce barbarians who had burnt the famous library of Alexandria, became the fondest admirers of the sciences (138). By them they were preserved, when they were almost entirely lost in all other parts of the world; and it was through them that the knowledge of ancient learning was gradually restored to the several nations of Europe.

Learning  
cultivated  
in the East.

The illustrious Gerbert, preceptor to Robert I. king of France, and to Otho III. emperor of Germany, who flourished towards the conclusion of the tenth century, was the first of the Christian clergy who had resolution to apply to the followers of Mahomet, for that instruction in the sciences which he could not obtain in any part of the Christian world. This literary hero (as he may be justly called) was educated in the monastery of Fleury: but discovering the incapacity of his teachers, and prompted by an ardent thirst for knowledge, he fled from his monastery into Spain, and spent several years among the Saracens at Corduba (139). Here he made himself master of the language and learning of the Arabians; particularly of their astronomy, geometry, and arithmetic; in all of which they very much excelled. At his return into France, he was esteemed by some the most learned man, and by others the greatest magician, of his age (140). All the nations in the north and west of Europe are particularly indebted to Gerbert for the first hints they received of the Arabian numeral figures and arithmetic. Our countryman William of Malmesbury, after telling us, that it was reported, that Gerbert had been taught by the Saracens in Spain, to raise the devil, and to understand the language of birds, adds,—‘It is, however, very certain, that he was the first who stole the knowledge of the Arabian arithmetic from the Saracens, and taught the rules of it, which still continue to engage the attention and perplex the minds of our arithmeticians (141).’ As Gerbert returned into France, A. D. 970, and began

Life of  
Gerbert.

(138) Montucla Hist. Mathemat. t. i. p. 339.

(139) W. Mahmf. l. 2. c. 10. (140) Id. ibid. (141) Id. ibid.

**Cent. X.** to communicate the knowledge which he had collected among the Saracens, it is not improbable, that some of the literati in Britain might be acquainted with the Arabian ciphers and arithmetic, in the end of this century, or the beginning of the next; which is much earlier than is commonly believed (142). If the date over the very ancient gateway at Worcester was really A. D. 975, and in Arabian figures, we have direct evidence that these figures were known in England within five years after Gerbert's return from Spain (143). However this may be, this adventurous scholar, though born of mean parents, was gradually advanced, on account of his genius and erudition, from one ecclesiastical dignity to another, and at last placed, by his pupil Otho III. in the papal chair, where he assumed the name of *Sylvester II.* (144). So much was pre-eminence in learning esteemed, and so well was it rewarded, even in that dark age!

**Cent. XI.**  
State of  
learning  
in the ele-  
venth cen-  
tury.

As little more than one half of the eleventh century falls within our present period, it will furnish few materials for literary history. The power of the Danes, and the confusion and misery thereby occasioned, which had been so fatal to learning in the former century, still continued to increase in the beginning of this, and to produce the same effects. Oxford was reduced to ashes by those destructive ravagers A. D. 1009, and Cambridge shared the same fate the year after; by which all the establishments in these places, in favour of learning, and for the education of youth, whatever they were, must have been ruined (145). In this most calamitous period, the greatest part of the monasteries, churches, cities, and towns in England, were destroyed; and whoever will take the trouble to read the history of the first seventeen years of the eleventh century in the Saxon Chronicle, the most authentic monument of those times, will meet with such a succession of slaughter and devastation, that he will be surprised the English were not extirpated, and their country reduced to a perfect desert. We have no reason to wonder, therefore, that the muses fled from such a scene of horror and misery, and that the cultivation of learning was almost universally neglected.

(142) See Dr. Wallis's *Algebra*, c. 3. 4.

(143) See *Philosoph. Transact.* vol. 39. p. 131.

(144) Du Pin *Hist. Eccles. cent. 12.*

(145) *Chron. Saxon.* p. 139, 140.

The calamities which the English had suffered in their long struggle with the Danes were so very great, that their subjection to the Danish yoke became a kind of blessing. For Canute the Great, the first king of England of the Danish line, being a wise, just, and good prince, treated his English subjects with equity and kindness, and endeavoured to repair the injuries which had been done to the country and its inhabitants in the late wars. In particular, he saw and lamented the low state to which learning was reduced, and founded schools in many places for its revival (146). It is highly probable at least, that this prince repaired the schools at Oxford, and restored to them their former privileges and revenues (147). Harold, the son and successor of Canute, was a very great barbarian, and consequently an enemy to learning. Of this he gave sufficient proof by his plundering the university of Oxford of the revenues which had been bestowed upon it by its illustrious founder, and restored to it by Canute the Great. ‘The schools (says Leland) which had been founded by Alfred the Great, and had long flourished at Oxford, were abused, spoiled, and dishonoured, by that cruel and barbarous Dane, king Harold; who plundered them of all the revenues which had been bestowed upon them by the munificence of former princes; thinking that he treated the scholars with great lenity when he left them the naked walls of their houses (148).’

Cent. XI.  
State of learning under the Danish kings of England.

The restoration of the ancient line of the Anglo-Saxon kings, A. D. 1041, in the person of Edward the Confessor, was an event favourable to learning. For though Edward was not a great prince, he was not unlearned for the age in which he lived, nor inattentive to the interests of learning. He repaired the injuries which his predecessor Harold had done to Oxford, which, in his reign (as we learn from Ingulphus), seems to have been the chief seminary of learning in England. ‘I was born (says that writer) in England, and of English parents, in the beautiful city of London; educated in letters in my tender years at Westminster; from whence I was afterwards sent to the study of Oxford; where I made greater progress in the Aristotelian phi-

State of learning in the reign of Edward the Confessor.

(146) A. Wood, *Antiquitat. Univ. Oxon.* p. 43.

(147) *Id. ibid.*

(148) *Id. ibid.*

Cent. XI. ' philosophy than many of my cotemporaries, and became  
 ' very well acquainted with the rhetoric of Cicero (149).'  
 This author further acquaints us, that when he was a boy at Westminster school, and used to visit his father, who lived in the court of Edward the Confessor, he was often examined, both on the Latin language and on logic, by the beautiful and virtuous queen Edgitha, who excelled in both these branches of literature (150). A proof that learning was then esteemed a fashionable accomplishment even in ladies of the highest rank.

General  
 observati-  
 ons on the  
 state of  
 learning.

Difficul-  
 ties of ac-  
 quiring  
 learning  
 in this pe-  
 riod.

Having thus deduced the history of learning through its various revolutions, from the beginning to the end of this dark period, it may be proper to conclude this chapter with a few general observations.

That we may not entertain too contemptible an opinion of our forefathers, who flourished in the benighted ages which we are now examining, it is necessary to pay due attention to their unhappy circumstances. To say nothing of that contempt for letters which they derived from their ancestors, and of the almost incessant wars in which they were engaged, it was difficult, or rather impossible, for any but the clergy, and a very few of the most wealthy among the laity, to obtain the least smattering of learning; because all the means of acquiring it were far beyond their reach. It is impossible to learn to read and write even our own native tongue, which is now hardly esteemed a part of learning, without books, masters, and materials for writing; but in these ages all these were so extremely scarce and dear, that none but great princes and wealthy prelates could procure them. We have already heard of a large estate given by a king of Northumberland for a single volume; and the history of the middle ages abounds with examples of that kind (151). How then was it possible for persons of a moderate fortune to procure so much as one book, much less such a number of books as to make their learning to read an accomplishment that would reward their trouble? It was then as difficult to borrow books as to buy them. It is a sufficient proof of this, that a king of France was obliged to deposit a considerable quantity of plate, and to get one of his nobility to join with him in

(149) Ingulphi Hister.

(150) Id. ibid.

(151) Murai. Antiq. t. 3. p. 835.



a bond, under a high penalty, to return it, before he Cent. XI. could procure the loan of one volume, which may now be purchased for a few shillings (152). Materials for writing were also very scarce and dear, which made few persons think of learning that art. This was one reason of the scarcity of books; and that great estates were often transferred from one owner to another by a mere verbal agreement, and the delivery of earth and stone, before witnesses, without any written deed (153). Parchment, in particular, on which all their books were written, was so difficult to be procured, that many of the MSS. of the middle ages, which are still preserved, appear to have been written on parchment from which some former writing had been erased (154). But if books and materials for writing were in those ages so scarce, good masters, who were capable of teaching the sciences to any purpose, were still scarcer, and more difficult to be procured. When there was not one man in England to the south of the Thames who understood Latin, it was not possible to learn that language, without sending for a teacher from some foreign country. In these circumstances, can we be surprised, that learning was so imperfect, and in so few hands? The temple of Science was then but a homely fabric, with few charms to allure worshippers, and at the same time surrounded with steep and rugged precipices, which discouraged their approach. When Alfred the Great formed the design of rendering learning more general than it had formerly been, he never dreamed of extending it to the common people, which he knew was quite impracticable, but only obliged persons of rank and fortune, by a law, to send their sons to school; and we have good reason to believe, that this was esteemed a very hard law, and that it was not long obeyed.

Besides the great difficulty of procuring masters who were capable of teaching the sciences, in the times we are now considering, the perplexing incommodious methods in which they were taught, rendered the acquisition of a moderate degree of knowledge a very tedious and laborious work. How difficult, for example, was the acquisition of arithmetic in this period, before the introduction of the Arabian figures, when the teachers

Methods of teaching the sciences, particularly arithmetic, music, &c.

(152) Hist. de Louis XI. par Comines, t. 4. p. 281.

(153) Ingulph. Hist. (154) Murator. Antiquitat. t. 3. p. 834.

*Cont.* XI. of this science had no other marks for numbers but the following seven letters of the Roman alphabet, M D C L X V I, or the twenty-seven letters of the Greek alphabet (155)? We are apt to be surpris'd to hear Aldhelm, the most learned and ingenious man of the age in which he lived, speaking of arithmetic as a science almost exceeding the utmost powers of the human mind, when we know that it is now acquired by every boy of a common capacity, with great ease, and in a little time (156). But our surpris'e will cease, when we reflect on the great facility of expressing and managing numbers by the help of the Arabian figures, which were then unknown, but are now in common use. 'The usefulness (says an excellent judge) of these numeral figures, which we received from the Arabs, and they from the Indians, is exceeding great in all parts of arithmetic; insomuch that we, to whom it is now known, cannot but wonder how it was possible for the ancients to manage great numbers without it. And certainly, such vast numbers as we are now wont to consider, could not in any tolerable way be managed, if we had no other way of designing numbers than by the Latin numeral letters M D C L X V I. It is true the ancients had the same way of distributing numbers that we have, collecting units into tens, and tens into hundreds, and hundreds into thousands, and thousands into myriads, &c.; but they wanted a convenient way of notation, or designation of them, proportional to that distribution; insomuch that when they came to thousands or myriads, they had scarce any more convenient ways of designing them than by words at length for want of figures (157).' It was probably this want of figures that gave rise to digital or manual arithmetic; in which numbers were expressed, and calculations made, by the different positions of the hands and fingers. This appears to us a childish play; but it was then a serious study, and is explained at great length by venerable Bede (158). Mankind commonly fall upon various contrivances for accomplishing their designs, before they hit upon that which is at once the most easy and the most effectual. In this period, music was a most

(155) See Bede Opera, Coloniae. A. D. 1612, p. 8.

(156) See p. 15.

(157) Wallis's Algebra, c. 5.

(158) Bede Opera, p. 127, &amp;c.

important part of a learned education, and one of the four sciences which constituted the *quadrivium*, or highest class of philosophical learning. But the modes of teaching both the theory and practice of music, were so imperfect and incommodious, that the youth commonly spent nine or ten years in the study of it, to no great purpose, until Guydo Aretin, a monk of St. Croix in Italy, in the eleventh century, invented the scale or gamut now used, which greatly facilitated the acquisition of this science (159). The same observation might be made concerning the methods of teaching geometry, astronomy, and all the other sciences. These methods were so imperfect and perplexed, that it required much longer time, and greater degrees of genius and application, to make any proficiency in these sciences, than it doth at present. For these reasons, we ought rather to felicitate ourselves on the happiness of our circumstances for the acquisition of knowledge, than to boast of our superior talents, or insult the memory of our ancestors on account of their ignorance, which was in a great measure unavoidable.

Every intelligent and attentive reader must have observed, that several branches of learning, which are now in high esteem, and much studied, have hardly been mentioned in the preceding history, as particularly geography, law, and medicine. This hath not been owing to inattention, far less to any degree of disregard to these parts of learning, whose importance and utility are undeniable, but to the real state of things in the ages we are now examining, in which these sciences were very much neglected. A few observations, however, upon the state of these, and some other branches of learning, in this period, may not be improper in this place.


Some sciences not mentioned in the above history.

The prodigious extent of the Roman empire made the knowledge of geography necessary to government, and at the same time rendered the acquisition of it easy; but when that mighty empire was torn in pieces by the barbarous nations, the connection between its provinces was dissolved, and their geography neglected: for each of these illiterate nations, anxious to preserve the province which it had seized, had little or no curiosity to know

State of geography.

(159) Bruckeri Hist. Philosoph. t. 3. p. 654.

(160) See Tr. Robertson's excellent History of Charles V. vol. 1. p. 325.

Cent. XI.  the situation and state of other countries; and the intercourse between these nations for several ages was very inconsiderable (160). To the inhabitants of one country, in this dark period, all the other countries of the world were *terre incognite*; of which they knew nothing, and about which they gave themselves little or no concern. Even the learned men of those ages being chiefly monks, confined to their cells, had little desire, and less opportunity, of knowing the situation, extent, climate, soil, productions, &c. of the several countries of the world. At present, indeed, a man may become an excellent geographer, without stirring out of his elbow-chair, by the help of books, globes, charts, maps, and masters; but at that time they had no such means of obtaining this kind of knowledge. Travellers were also very few; and these few were either pilgrims or merchants, who travelled in quest of relics or of riches, and not of geographical knowledge. When all these circumstances are duly considered, we shall not be much surprised that geography was so much neglected, and so little known, in the ages we are now delineating.

State of  
law.

The Saxons, at their arrival in Britain, and for a century and a half after, had no written laws, but were governed by certain ancient and well known customs, like their ancestors in Germany (161). In that period, therefore, law could not be considered as a science. Even after their laws were committed to writing, they were for a long time so short, plain, and inartificial, that little study was required to understand them. Accordingly the far greatest part of the aldermen, sheriffs, and other judges of England, were for several ages very illiterate; and Alfred the Great was the first of our English kings who made the knowledge of letters a necessary qualification in those who were concerned in the administration of justice (162). But that knowledge, which from thenceforward was esteemed requisite in a judge, could hardly be called learning; because it consisted in little more than a capacity of reading the doom-book in his mother-tongue. This seems to have been all that was required of those who were called law-men and wise-men, who were chosen to be sheriffs, judges, and assessors to the aldermen, in their county-courts (163).

(161) Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 12.

(162) Allen. Vita Alfredi. p. 21.

(163) Murator. Antiquitat. t. 1. p. 487, &c.



Though some collections of the laws and canons of the church were made in the eleventh century, the canon law had not acquired so much authority, or assumed such a regular form, as to be taught or studied as a science in the seminaries of learning in this period (164). Cent. XI.

The desire of life and health is so natural to mankind, that the means of preserving these, and of healing wounds, bruises, fractures, &c. have been some part of their study in all countries, and in all ages. But among illiterate nations, like the Anglo-Saxons, the means employed for these purposes are not commonly the result of study and rational investigation; but consist in certain pretended secrets, or nostrums, handed down from one age to another, accompanied with many whimsical rites and incantations, to which they are supposed to owe their success. In this state of things, these medical secrets are for the most part in the possession of the most ignorant of the people; particularly of old women, who were the most admired physicians among our Anglo-Saxon ancestors, and several other nations, in the dark ages we are now examining. ‘One reason (says a learned antiquary) of the great influence of the women among the northern nations, is this: while the men are employed in hunting and war, the women, having much time upon their hands, spend some part of it in gathering and preparing herbs, for healing wounds and curing diseases; and being naturally superstitious, they administer their medicines with many religious rites and ceremonies, which excite admiration, and make the men believe that they are possessed of certain supernatural secrets, and a kind of divine skill (165).’ After the Anglo-Saxons had embraced the Christian religion, they did not look with so favourable an eye on those superstitious ceremonies; and when the clergy began to apply a little to learning, they became dangerous rivals to the medical old women, who gradually sunk in their reputation. It appears, however, from many stories of miraculous cures related by the best of our ancient historians, that these clerical doctors were almost as superstitious as their female predecessors, and depended more on the virtues of holy water than of the

State of  
medicine.

(164) Brucker. Hist. Philosoph. t. 3. p. 655.

(165) Keyser Antiquitat. Septentrion. p. 374.

Cent. XI. medicines which they administered (166). After Alfred the Great set the example of translating books out of Latin into the Saxon language, some medical books were translated into that tongue; particularly L. Apuleius, concerning the virtues of herbs, which is still preserved in the Bodleian library, and is described by Mr. Wanley in his catalogue of Saxon books (167). By this, and other means, a few of the most studious and inquisitive of the clergy, and others, acquired some knowledge of physic; and before the conclusion of this period, there seem to have been some physicians, or rather surgeons, by profession, particularly in the courts of princes. In the court of the kings of Wales, the physician was the twelfth person in rank, and appears to have been chiefly employed in healing wounds and broken bones; for which he had by law certain established fees (168). For curing a flesh-wound that was not dangerous, this court-physician was allowed no other perquisite but such of the garments of the wounded person as were stained with blood; but for curing any of the three dangerous or mortal wounds, he was allowed a fee of one hundred and eighty pence, and his maintenance, or of one pound without his maintenance, besides the blood-stained garments. The three dangerous or mortal wounds, were these;—a wound on the head that discovered the scull,—a wound in the trunk of the body that discovered any of the viscera—and the fracture of the legs or arms. If the court-physician performed the operation of the trepan in curing a wound in the head, he was allowed four pence extraordinary for performing that operation. When he made use of the red ointment in curing a wound, he might charge twelve pence for it; but when he used an ointment made of herbs, he could only charge four pence (169). We are not told the ingredients nor the manner of preparing these ointments; and in general, it may be assumed, that we are not furnished with authentic materials for composing a minute and particular history of physic in the Anglo-Saxon times.

The dark-  
est period  
ended. The most agreeable reflection that can be made on the state of learning in Britain in the period we have been

(166) *Beed's Hist. Eccles.* l. 5. c. 3, 4, 5, 6.

(167) *Hickes's Thesaur.* t. 2. p. 72.

(168) *Leges Walliae*, p. 47, &c.

(169) *Id. ibid.*

examining, is this,—That we have now passed through Cent. XI. the most obscure uncomfortable part of that long night in which Great Britain, and all the other nations of Europe, were involved after the fall of the Roman empire, and are happily arrived upon the verge of day. For soon after the establishment of the Norman race of kings on the throne of England, several events happened which contributed to dispel that profound darkness which had so long prevailed, and to usher in the morning-light of learning; so that we may safely promise those who have had the patience to attend us in this most gloomy part of our journey, more agreeable entertainment in all the succeeding stages.

“ ————— Now at last the sacred influence  
“ Of light appears, and from the walls of heaven  
“ Shoots far into the bosom of dim night  
“ A glimmering dawn (170).”

(170) Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Book 2. sub fin.

THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
GREAT BRITAIN.

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BOOK II.

CHAP. V.

*The history of Arts in Great Britain, from the arrival of the Saxons, A. D. 449, to the landing of William duke of Normandy, A. D. 1066.*

Import-  
ance of  
the arts.

THE arts are so necessary to the support, and so conducive to the comfort of human life, that they are of the greatest importance to mankind in every age and country. Without the arts, the natural fecundity of the earth, the genial warmth of the sun, and the regular revolutions of the seasons, are of small avail: but by the almost creative power of art, barren deserts are converted into fertile fields, covered with lowing herds, or golden harvests, interspersed with pleasant villages, populous towns, and crowded cities. By the help of art, mankind acquire a kind of dominion over nature, penetrate into the bowels of the earth, travel over the waves of the sea on the wings of the wind, and make all the elements subservient to their purposes. In one word, the arts are the great means of promoting the populousness, power, and greatness, of states and kingdoms, as well as the felicity of individuals; and therefore few, we apprehend, will blame



blame us for giving them a place in history. If this had been always done, the annals of mankind would have been more instructive and entertaining than they are. But, unhappily, the Muse of history hath been so much in love with Mars, that she hath conversed but little with Minerva.

The arts, like all other human things, are liable to vicissitudes: they often change their seats; and flourish at one time, and languish at another, in the same country. In the Roman times, as we have already seen, the arts were in a very flourishing state in this island, particularly in provincial Britain<sup>(1)</sup>. But when the Roman power began to decline, the arts began to languish; and the most skilful artists of all kinds, dreading the depredations of the Saxons, Scots, and Picts, and finding neither security nor employment in this island, gradually retired to the continent. The final departure of the Romans, with the arrival of the Saxons, and the ruinous wars that followed, finished the destruction of the arts. For the dastardly unwarlike Britons, not daring to face their fierce invaders in the field, took shelter behind those walls and ramparts which the Romans had erected; which drew upon *them* the desperate attacks of the Saxons, who never rested till they had laid them all in ruins. In the course of these wars, one city was taken and destroyed after another; so that, before the establishment of the heptarchy, almost all the beautiful monuments of Roman art and industry in Britain were ruined or defaced. An ancient writer, who was an eye-witness of these scenes of desolation, hath painted them in very strong colours. ‘A fire was kindled by the sacrilegious hands of the Saxons, which spread from city to city, and never ceased until it had burnt up the whole surface of the island, from sea to sea, with its flaming tongue. The walls of all the colonies were beat down to the ground with battering rams, and their inhabitants slain with the point of the sword. Nothing was to be seen in the streets, O horrible to relate! but fragments of ruined towers, temples, and walls, fallen from their lofty seats, besprinkled with blood, and mixed with mangled carcases<sup>(2)</sup>.’ This barbarous and destructive method of proceeding was partly owing

Decline of  
the arts in  
Britain.

(1) See Book I. c. 5.

(2) *Historia Gildæ*, c. 24.

to the natural ferocity of the Saxons, and partly to the obstinate resistance of the Britons; by which that beautiful country, which the one struggled to conquer, and the other to defend, was stripped of all its ornaments in the scuffle. At the end of those long wars, when the Saxons obtained possession of the finest provinces of Britain, by the extirpation of their ancient inhabitants, they were really a barbarous and unhappy people, destitute of the most desirable accommodations, and of the arts by which they are procured; without models to imitate, or masters to teach them these arts. By this means we are once more reduced to the disagreeable necessity of viewing the arts, both necessary and ornamental, in a very rude imperfect state. An unpleasant object! on which our readers of the best taste will not wish us to dwell long.

Plan of  
this chap-  
ter.

In delineating the state of the arts in this period, we shall observe the same order as in the former; beginning with those which are necessary to the support and preservation of human life, and may therefore be called the necessary arts; and concluding with those which administer to its delight, and may therefore be called the pleasing or ornamental arts.

Arts of  
procuring  
food.

As nothing is so necessary to the preservation of human life as food, those arts by which it is procured must be of all others the most necessary; which are chiefly these four, hunting, pasturage, fishing and agriculture.

Hunting.

Cæsar and Tacitus seem to differ in their accounts of the ancient Germans, the ancestors of the Anglo-Saxons, with respect to hunting; the former affirming that they spent their whole time in hunting when they were not engaged in war; and the latter, that when they were not at war, they were not very much addicted to hunting, but spent the greatest part of their time in idleness or feasting (3). The reason of these different accounts, which were probably both true, seems to be this, that when Cæsar wrote, which was near two centuries before Tacitus, hunting was not merely an amusement among the Germans, but an art on which they very much depended for their subsistence; but when Tacitus

(3) Cæsar de Bel. Gal. l. 6. c. 21. Tacit. de Morib. German.  
c. 15.

wrote,

wrote, agriculture was so much improved, that hunting was no longer a necessary art, but rather a diversion, which they followed only when they were prompted by inclination, and not by necessity. However this may be, it is sufficiently certain, that though our Anglo-Saxon ancestors did not disdain to use the game which they had caught in hunting; yet they did not very much depend upon it for their subsistence; and therefore, as hunting amongst them was rather a diversion than a necessary art, it will fall more naturally in our way in another place (4).

At the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons, this island abounded in numerous flocks and herds, which these conquerors seized, and pastured for their own use; and after their settlement they still continued to follow pasturage as one of the chief means of their subsistence. This is evident from the great number of laws that were made in the Anglo-Saxon times, for regulating the prices of all kinds of tame cattle, directing the manner in which they were to be pastured, and for preserving them from thieves, robbers, and beasts of prey (5). As the Welsh in this period, from the nature of their country, and other circumstances, depended still more on their flocks and herds for their support, their laws respecting pasturage were more numerous and minute than those of the Saxons (6). From these laws we learn, among many other particulars which need not be mentioned, that all the cattle of a village, though belonging to different owners, were pastured together in one herd, under the direction of one person (with proper assistants); whose oath, in all disputes about the cattle under his care, was decisive (7).

When we consider the situation of the countries inhabited by our Anglo-Saxon ancestors, both on the continent and in this island, having so great a tract of sea-coast, and so many fine rivers, abounding with fish of all kinds, we can hardly suppose, that they were ignorant of the art of fishing. We are assured, however, by venerable Bede, that the South-Saxons were so ignorant of this very necessary and useful art, that they could catch no other fish but eels, till they were instructed by

(4) See Chap. 7.

(5) Wilkins *Leges Saxon.* passim.(6) *Leges Wallicæ*, passim.(7) *Id.* p. 94.

Wilfred bishop of York, and his followers, who took shelter in their country A. D. 678. The people of the little kingdom of Suffex were at this time afflicted with such a dreadful famine, that great numbers of them perished with hunger, and others precipitated themselves from the rocks into the sea in despair. ‘ When the bishop (says Bede) came into this kingdom, and beheld the miserable havoc that was made by the famine, he taught the poor people to procure some sustenance for themselves by fishing. For though their sea and rivers abounded with fish, they had not skill to catch any of them but a few eels. Having, therefore, collected all the eel-nets he could procure, the bishop sent his own servants, with some others, out to sea; where, by the divine blessing, they caught three hundred fishes, of various kinds; which he divided into three equal parts, bestowing one hundred on the poor people of the country, another on those to whom the nets belonged, and keeping the third for the use of his own family. The bishop gained the affections of the people of Suffex to a wonderful degree, by teaching them this useful art; and they listened more willingly to his preaching, from whom they had received so great a temporal benefit (8).’ After the Christian religion was fully established in all the kingdoms of the heptarchy, the art of fishing became necessary on a religious account, as both the clergy and laity lived, some part of the year, chiefly on fish. This art seems to have been practised chiefly, if not wholly, by a particular set of slaves, in those times, who were bought and sold, together with their wives and children, the implements of their trade, and the places where they fished (9). We learn also from the laws of Ina king of Wessex, that some part of the rent of those farms which lay on the banks of rivers was paid in fish; which obliged the ceorls who occupied those farms to employ some of their slaves in fishing (10).

Agriculture  
among the  
Britons.

As agriculture is one of the most excellent and useful arts, and the chief means of improving and increasing the productions of the earth, for the support of human

(8) Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. 4. c. 14.

(9) Du Cange Gloss. voc. Piscatores.

(10) Spelman Gloss. voc. Fenna.



life, it merits our particular attention in every period. We have already seen, that this noble art had been carried to so great perfection in provincial Britain in the flourishing times of the Roman government, that it afforded very great quantities of corn annually for exportation (11). But agriculture, like all the other arts, declined with the declension of the Roman power in Britain, and was almost destroyed by the departure of that industrious people. This, however, was not so much owing to want of skill in the British husbandmen, who had been instructed by the Romans, as to the cruel and frequent incursions of the Saxons, Scots, and Picts, who both destroyed the fruits of their labours, and interrupted them in the exercise of their art. For when they enjoyed some respite from these incursions for a few years, and were allowed to cultivate their lands in peace, these produced, as we are told by Gildas, the greatest abundance of all kinds of grain (12). After the arrival of the Saxons, the unhappy Britons were involved in such long wars, and so many calamities, that they gradually lost much of their skill in agriculture, and were at last expelled from those parts of their country that were fittest for cultivation. We need not be surpris'd, therefore, that the posterity of the ancient Britons, after they were confined to the mountains of Wales, were but unskilful husbandmen; and that they applied more to pasturage than to agriculture. This is evident from their laws, by which many mulcts, and even the prices of men's lives of all ranks, are appointed to be paid in cattle (13). It appears, however, from these very laws, that agriculture was considered by the ancient Britons of this period as an object of very great importance, and made the subject of many regulations. By one of these laws, they were prohibited to plough with horses, mares, or cows, but only with oxen (14). Their ploughs seem to have been very slight and inartificial; for it was enacted, that no man should undertake to guide a plough who could not make one; and that the driver should make the ropes of twisted willows, with which it was drawn (15). But slight as these ploughs were, it was usual for six or eight persons to form themselves into a society for sitting

(11) See vol. i.

(12) *Historia Gildæ*, c. 19.(13) *Leges Wallicæ*, p. 26—72. 201, 202, 203.(14) *Id.* p. 285.(15) *Id.* *ibid.*

out one of them, and providing it with oxen, and every thing necessary for ploughing; and many minute and curious laws were made for the regulation of such societies (16). This is a sufficient proof, both of the poverty of the husbandmen, and of the imperfect state of agriculture among the ancient Britons, in this period. If any person laid dung upon a field, with the consent of the proprietor, he was by law allowed the use of it for one year; and if the dung was carried out on a cart, in great abundance, he was allowed the use of the field for three years. Whoever cut down a wood, and converted the ground into arable, with the consent of the owner, was to have the use of it five years. If any man folded his cattle for a whole year upon a piece of ground belonging to another, with his consent, he was allowed to cultivate that ground for his own benefit four years (17). All these laws were evidently made for the encouragement of agriculture, by increasing the quantity, and improving the quality of their arable grounds. The British legislators of this period discover the greatest possible anxiety for the preservation of the fruits of the earth, and the labours of the husbandman; there being no fewer than eighty-six laws made, for guarding them from every injury, or for repairing the injuries which they sustain (18). Nor was all this care unnecessary, in an open country, where cattle very much abounded, and corn was very scarce and precious. It is highly probable, that agriculture was in the same, or perhaps in a more imperfect state, among the Scots and Picts, in the northern parts of this island; though we can say nothing with certainty on that subject, for want of authentic monuments. The ancient Britons in this period were not absolutely ignorant of the art of gardening; though their gardens seem to have produced nothing but a few apples and pot-herbs, with flax, leeks, and onions (19).—— It is now time to take a short view of the state of agriculture among the Anglo-Saxons in this period.

Among  
the Eng-  
lish.

The ancient Germans, from whom our Anglo-Saxon ancestors derived their origin and manners, were not much addicted to agriculture, but depended chiefly on their flocks and herds for their subsistence (20). These

(16) *Leges Wallicæ*, p. 283.

(18) *Id.* p. 28—298.

(20) *Strabo*, l. 7. *Cæsar de Bel. Gal.* l. 6.

(17) *Id.* p. 52, &c.

(19) *Id.* p. 286.

restless and haughty warriors esteemed the cultivation of their lands too ignoble and laborious an employment for themselves, and therefore committed it wholly to their women and slaves (21). They were even at pains to contrive laws to prevent their contracting a taste for agriculture, lest it should render them less fond of arms and warlike expeditions (22). Those who inhabited the sea-coasts, and particularly the Angles, Jutes, Danes, and Saxons, were so much addicted to piracy, and depended so much on plunder for their subsistence, that they were averse to, and more ignorant of agriculture, than the other Germans. From all these circumstances, we may be very certain, that the Anglo-Saxons, at their arrival in this island, were much better warriors than husbandmen, more expert at wielding the sword than guiding the plough. For some time after their arrival, fighting was their only business; because corn, and all other provisions, were furnished to their hands by the Britons, according to agreement. Even after the commencement of hostilities between them and the Britons, they subsisted chiefly by plunder, until they had obtained an establishment, by the expulsion or extirpation of the greatest part of the ancient inhabitants, whose lands they divided amongst themselves. Having then no enemies to plunder, they found it necessary to give some attention to the cultivation of their lands, in order to raise those provisions which they could no longer procure by the point of their swords.

The Saxon princes and great men, who, in the division of the conquered lands, obtained the largest shares, are said to have subdivided their estates into two parts, which were called the *inlands* and the *outlands*. The *inlands* were those which lay most contiguous to the mansion-house of their owner, which he kept in his own immediate possession, and cultivated by his slaves, under the direction of a bailiff, for the purpose of raising provisions for his family. The *outlands* were those which lay at a greater distance from the mansion-house, and were let to the ceorls or farmers of those times, at a certain rent; which was very moderate, and generally paid in kind (23). The owners of land were not at liberty to exact as high a rent from their ceorls or tenants

(21) Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 15.

(22) Id. c. 26.

(23) Reliquiæ Spelmanianæ, p. 12.

as they could obtain; but the rates of these rents were ascertained by law, according to the number of hides or plough-lands of which a farm consisted. The reason of this seems to have been, that the first ceorls or farmers among the Anglo-Saxons were freemen and soldiers, and had contributed to the conquest of the country by their arms, and were therefore entitled to be treated with indulgence, and protected by law from the oppression of their superiors. By the laws of Ina king of the West-Saxons, who flourished in the end of the seventh and beginning of the eighth century, a farm consisting of ten hides or plough-lands was to pay the following rent, viz. ten casks of honey,—three hundred loaves of bread,—twelve casks of strong ale,—thirty casks of small ale,—two oxen,—ten wethers,—ten geese,—twenty hens,—ten cheeses,—one cask of butter,—five salmon,—twenty pounds of forage,—and one hundred eels (24). There seems to be some mistake in the quantity of forage, which is too trifling to be mentioned, and the whole rent is very low, in proportion to the quantity of land; which may be considered as an evidence, both of the free and comfortable condition of the ceorls, and of the imperfect state of agriculture among the Saxons. In some places these rents were paid in wheat, rye, oats, malt, flour, hogs, sheep, &c. according to the nature of the farm, or the custom of the country (25). There is, however, sufficient evidence, that money-rents for lands were not altogether unknown in England in this period (26). The greatest part of the crown-lands in every county were farmed in this manner, by ceorls, who paid a certain quantity of provisions of different kinds, for the support of the king's household, according to the nature and extent of the lands which they possessed (27). ‘ We have been informed (says the author of the black book in the exchequer), that in ancient times our kings received neither gold nor silver from their tenants, but only provisions for the daily use of their household; and the officers who were appointed to manage the king's lands, knew very well what kinds, and what quantities of provisions every tenant was obliged to pay. This custom continued even after

(24) Wilkins *Leges Saxon.* p. 25.(25) *Spelman Gloss.* voc. *Firma.*(26) *Historia Eliensis*, l. i. c. 52.(27) *Id.* *ibid.*



‘ the conquest, during the whole reign of William I.; and I myself have conversed with several old people who had seen the royal tenants paying their rents in several kinds of provisions at the king’s court (28).’ In some other countries of Europe, in this period, particularly in Italy, the rents of lands consisted in a certain proportion (most commonly the fourth or fifth part) of the different kinds of grain which these lands produced (29). But in England the rents of land were much lower, on account of the more imperfect state of agriculture. If the lowness of the rents of lands in England in this period is a proof of the imperfection of agriculture, the lowness of their prices when they were sold is still a stronger evidence of the same fact, as well as of the great scarcity of money. In the ancient history of the church of Ely, published by Dr. Gale, the curious reader will meet with accounts of many purchases of lands that were made by Ædelwold, the founder of that church, and by other benefactors, in the reign of Edgar the Peaceable, in the tenth century (30). By carefully comparing all these accounts together, it plainly appears, that the ordinary price of an acre of the best land, in that part of England, in those times, was sixteen Saxon pennies, or about four shillings of our money: a very trifling price indeed, not only in comparison of the prices of land in our times, but even in comparison of the prices of other commodities in those very times. For in the same history of the church of Ely, we are told, that bishop Æthelwold and abbot Brithnoth, in paying for an estate which they had purchased for that church, gave twenty sheep for twenty Saxon shillings, and one palfrey for ten of these shillings, of the price; from whence it follows, that four sheep were then of the same value with one acre of the best land, and one horse of the same value with three acres (31). This is so exceedingly different from the present state of things, that it would appear quite incredible; if it was not supported by the most unquestionable evidence. The frequent and deplorable famines which afflicted England, from time to time, in the

(28) *Liber niger Scaccarii*, l. 1. c. 7.

(29) *Narrator. Antiq.* t. 2. p. 353.

(30) *Hist. Britan.* xv. a Tho. Gale edit. t. 1. p. 477, &c.

(31) *Id.* t. 1. p. 471.

course of this period, and carried off great multitudes of its inhabitants, afford a further and more melancholy proof of the wretched state of cultivation (32). In particular, there was so great a scarcity of grain A. D. 1043, that a quarter of wheat sold for sixty Saxon pennies, which contained as much silver as fifteen of our shillings, and were equal in value to seven or eight pounds of our money (33): a most extravagant price, which must have involved not only the poor, but even those in the middle ranks of life, in the most extreme distress. In one word, we have sufficient evidence, that England, which in the Roman times was one of the great granaries of Europe, and afforded prodigious quantities of corn for exportation, was so ill cultivated by the Anglo-Saxons, that in the most favourable seasons it yielded only a scanty provision for its own inhabitants, and in unfavourable seasons was a scene of the most deplorable distress and scarcity.

Practices  
of the  
Anglo-  
Saxon hus-  
bandmen.

When this was the state of agriculture, it will not be proper to spend much time in delineating the practices of the Anglo-Saxon husbandmen. They ploughed, sowed, and harrowed their fields; but as all these operations were performed by wretched slaves, who had little or no interest in their success, we may be certain that they were executed in a very slovenly and superficial manner: their ploughs were very slight, and (like those of the people of Shetland at present) had but one stilt or handle (34). Though water-mills for grinding corn were well known to the Visigoths in Spain, and the Longobards in Italy, as appears from the ancient laws of these nations, the Anglo-Saxons seem to have been unacquainted with them during some part of this period; and had no better way of converting their corn into meal, than by grinding it in hand-mills that were turned by women. By the laws of Ethelbert king of Kent, a particular mulct was imposed upon any man who debauched the king's grinding-maid (35). Ina king of Wessex made several laws for the inclosing of arable lands, and regulating the proportion of grounds to be left in tillage at the departure of a tenant (36). The

(32) Chron. Saxon. p. 65. 123. 134. 157. &c.

(33) Id. p. 157. (34) Bede Hist. Abbat. Weremuthen. p. 296.

(35) Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 3.

(36) Id. p. 25.

lands belonging to the monasteries were by much the best cultivated; because the secular canons who possessed them spent some part of their time in cultivating their own lands. Venerable Bede, in his life of Easterwin abbot of Weremouth, tells us, ‘ That this abbot, being a strong man, and of a humble disposition, used to assist his monks in their rural labours, sometimes guiding the plough by its stilt or handle, sometimes winnowing corn, and sometimes forging instruments of husbandry with a hammer upon an anvil (37).’ For in those times the husbandmen were under a necessity of making many implements of husbandry with their own hands.

When the arts and practices of the husbandman were <sup>Art of</sup> so imperfect, it cannot be supposed that those of the gar- <sup>gardening.</sup> dener had made greater progress. There is, however, sufficient evidence, that gardens were cultivated, and fruit-trees planted and ingrafted, in this period, particularly by the monks. Brithnod, the first abbot of Ely, is celebrated for his skill in gardening, and for the excellent gardens and orchards which he made near that monastery. ‘ He performed another great and useful work which I think it is proper to relate to his praise. Being skilful in the arts of planting and gardening, and considering that the place would be more pleasant and beautiful if it was surrounded with plantations, he laid out very extensive gardens and orchards, which he filled with a great variety of herbs, shrubs, and fruit-trees. In a few years, the trees which he planted and ingrafted, appeared at a distance like a wood, loaded with the most excellent fruits in great abundance, and added much to the commodiousness and beauty of the place (38).’

The useful and necessary art of architecture suffered <sup>Architec-</sup> no less than that of agriculture, by the departure of the <sup>ture.</sup> Romans. That ingenious and active people, with the assistance of their British subjects, who were instructed by them, had adorned their dominions in this island with a prodigious number of elegant and magnificent structures, both for public and private use (39). Some of

(37) Bedæ Hist. Abbat. Weremuth. p. 296.

(38) Hist. Eliens. apud Gale, l. 2. c. 2.

(39) See vol. 1.

these structures were built with so much solidity, that they would have resisted all the attacks of time, and remained to this very day, if they had not been wilfully destroyed (40). This was done by the Anglo-Saxons in the course of their long wars against the unhappy Britons: for it seems to have been a maxim with these ferocious conquerors, to destroy all the towns and castles which they took from their enemies, instead of preserving them for their own use.

Among  
the An-  
glo-Sax-  
ons.

It cannot be supposed, that a people who wantonly demolished so many beautiful and useful structures, had any taste for the arts by which they had been erected. The truth is, that the Anglo-Saxons, at their arrival in this island, were almost totally ignorant of these arts, and, like all the other nations of Germany, had been accustomed to live in wretched hovels, built of wood or earth, and covered with straw or the branches of trees: nor did they much improve in the knowledge of architecture for two hundred years after their arrival (41). During that period, masonry was quite unknown and unpractised in this island; and the walls even of cathedral churches were built of wood. ‘There was a time (says venerable Bede) when there was not a stone church in all the land; but the custom was to build them all of wood.—Finan, the second bishop of Lindisfarne, or Holy-island, built a church in that island A. D. 652, for a cathedral, which yet was not of stone, but of wood, and covered with reeds; and so it continued, till Eadbert, the successor of St. Cuthbert, and seventh bishop of Lindisfarne, took away the reeds, and covered it all over, both roof and walls, with sheets of lead (42).’ The first cathedral of York was built of the same materials; and a church of stone was esteemed a kind of prodigy in those times that merited a place in history. ‘Paulinus, the first bishop of York, built a church of stone in the city of Lincoln, whose walls (says Bede) are still standing, though the roof is fallen down; and some healing miracles are wrought in it every year, for the benefit of those who have the faith to seek them (43).’

(40) The famous edifice, called *Claver's Tower*, on the banks of the Carron in Scotland, which was almost quite entire when it was taken down A. D. 1742, is a sufficient proof of this.

(41) Cluver. *Ant. German.* p. 86. &c.

(42) Bede *Hist. Eccles.* l. 3. c. 4. l. 5. c. 25.

(43) Id. *ibid.* l. 2. c. 16.



There does not seem to have been so much as one church of stone, nor any artists who could build one, in all Scotland, at the beginning of the eighth century. For Naitan king of the Picts, in his famous letter to Ceolfred abbot of Weremouth, A. D. 710, earnestly intreats him to send him some masons to build a church of stone in his kingdom, in imitation of the Romans; which he promises to dedicate to the honour of the apostle Peter, to whom the abbey of Weremouth was dedicated: and we are told by Bede, who was then living in that abbey, that the reverend abbot Ceolfred granted this pious request, and sent masons according to his desire (44).

Masonry was restored, and some other arts connected with it introduced into England, towards the end of the seventh century, by two clergymen, who were great travellers, and had often visited Rome, where they had acquired some taste for these arts. These were, the famous Wilfrid bishop of York, and afterwards of Hexham, and Benedict Biscop, founder of the abbey of Weremouth. Wilfrid, who was one of the most ingenious, active, and magnificent prelates of the seventh century, was a great builder, and erected several structures at York, Rippon, and Hexham, which were the admiration of the age in which he flourished (45). The cathedral of Hexham, which was one of these structures, is thus described by his biographer: ‘ Having obtained a piece of ground at Hexham from queen Etheldreda, he there founded a most magnificent church, which he dedicated to the blessed apostle St. Andrew. As the plan of this sacred structure seems to have been inspired by the spirit of God, it would require a genius much superior to mine to describe it properly. How large and strong were the subterraneous buildings, constructed of the finest polished stones! How magnificent the superstructure, with its lofty roof, supported by many pillars, its long and high walls, its sublime towers, and winding stairs! In one word, there is no church on this side of the Alps so great and beautiful (46).’ This admired edifice, of which some vestiges are still remaining, was built by

Masonry  
restored in  
England.

(44) Id. l. 5. c. 21.

(45) Eddii Vita Wilfridi, c. 16, 17, 22.

(46) Id. ibid. c. 22.

masons,

maſons, and other artificers, brought from Rome, by the munificence of its generous founder (47). Benedict Biſcop was the cotemporary and companion of Wilfrid in ſome of his journies, and had the ſame taſte for the arts (48). He made no fewer than ſix journies to Rome, chiefly with a view of collecting books, pictures, ſtatues, and other curioſities, and of perſuading artificers of various kinds to come from Italy and France, and ſettle in England. Having obtained a grant of a conſiderable eſtate from Ecgfrid king of Northumberland, near the mouth of the river Were, he there founded a monaſtery A. D. 674. ‘ About a year after the foundations of this monaſtery were laid, Benedict croſſed the ſea into France, where he collected a number of maſons, and brought them over with him, in order to build the church of his monaſtery of ſtone, after the Roman manner; of which he was a great admirer. His love to the apoſtle Peter, to whom he deſigned to dedicate his church, made him urge theſe workmen to labour ſo hard, that maſs was celebrated in it about a year after it was founded. When the work was far advanced, he ſent agents into France, to procure, if poſſible, ſome glaſs-makers, a kind of artificers quite unknown in England, and to bring them over to glaze the windows of his church and monaſtery. Theſe agents were ſucceſſful, and brought ſeveral glaſs-makers with them; who not only performed the work required by Benedict, but inſtructed the Engliſh in the art of making glaſs for windows, lamps, drinking-veſſels, and other uſes (49).’

Art of  
making  
glaſs.

From this authentic account, it appears, that it is now about eleven hundred years ſince this very elegant and uſeful art of making glaſs was brought into England. Before that period, the windows of houſes and churches were filled, either with linen cloth, or with lattices of wood. This we learn from the following account given by William of Malmsbury, of the great reparations that were made on the cathedral of York by biſhop Wilfrid, about the ſame time, and with the aſſiſtance of the ſame artificers. ‘ The holy biſhop was much grieved to ſee the decaying and almoſt ruinous ſtate of the cathedral

(47) W. Malms. de Geſtis Pontific. l. 3.

(49) Id. ibid.

(49) Bedæ Hiſt. Abbat. Weremuthen.

‘ church of York, which had been built by king Edwin  
 ‘ at the desire of Paulinus; and immediately set about  
 ‘ the reparation of it. He restored the roof, and cover-  
 ‘ ed it with sheets of lead; white-washed the walls with  
 ‘ lime, and put glass into the windows; some of which  
 ‘ had before admitted the light through fine linen  
 ‘ cloths, and others through lattices (50).’

But though these arts of building edifices of stone, Stone buildings are in England in the eighth and ninth centuries. with windows of glass, and other ornaments, were thus introduced by these two prelates in the latter part of the seventh century, they do not seem to have flourished much for several centuries. It appears from many incidental hints in our ancient historians, that stone buildings were still very rare in the eighth and ninth ages, and that when any such buildings were erected, they were the objects of much admiration. When Alfred the Great, towards the end of the ninth century, formed the design of rebuilding his ruined cities, churches, and monasteries, and of adorning his dominions with more magnificent structures, he was obliged to bring many of his artificers from foreign countries. ‘ Of these (as we  
 ‘ are told by his friend and companion Asserius) he had  
 ‘ an almost innumerable multitude, collected from dif-  
 ‘ ferent nations; many of them the most excellent in  
 ‘ their several arts (51).’ Nor is it the least praise of this illustrious prince, that he was the greatest builder and the best architect of the age in which he flourished. His historian, who was an eye-witness of his works, speaks in the following strain of admiration of the number of his buildings: ‘ What shall I say of the towns  
 ‘ and cities which he repaired, and of others which he  
 ‘ built from the foundation where there had been none  
 ‘ before (52)?’ Some of his buildings were also magnificent for that age, and of a new and singular construction; particularly the church of his new monastery of Æthelinge; of which the reader may see a plan in the work quoted below (53). This church, however, was built only of wood; and it seems probable that Alfred’s buildings were in general more remarkable for their number and utility, than for their grandeur: for there is sufficient evidence, that long after his time, almost all the houses in England,

(50) W. Malmf. de Gestis Pontific. p. 149.

(51) Asser. de Ælfredi Rebus gestis, p. 20.

(52) Id. ibid.

(53) Vita Ælfredi Latine reddita, p. 131.

and the far greatest part of the monasteries and churches, were very mean buildings, constructed of wood, and covered with thatch. Edgar the Peaceable, who flourished after the middle of the tenth century, observed, that at his accession to the throne, all the monasteries in England were in a ruinous condition, and consisted only of rotten boards (54). Though the art of making glass was introduced in the seventh century, yet it was afterwards so much neglected, that no private houses had glass windows till after the conclusion of this period (55). In a word, several of our ancient historians agree, that the Anglo-Saxon nobility had no taste for magnificent buildings, but spent their great revenues in mean, low, and inconvenient houses (56). This seems to have been owing in a great measure to the unsettled state of their country, and the frequent destructive depredations of the Danes, who made it a constant rule to burn all the houses, monasteries, and churches, wherever they came. From the few remains of Anglo-Saxon architecture which may still be seen in England, as well as from the direct testimony of venerable Bede, it plainly appears to have been a rude imitation of the ancient Roman manner, and very different from that which is commonly though very improperly, called Gothic; of which so many noble specimens adorn our country (57). The most admired of the Saxon churches seem to have been low and gloomy, their pillars plain and clumsy, their walls immoderately thick, their windows few and small, with semicircular arches at the top (58).

State of  
architecture in  
Wales.

If architecture was so imperfect in England in this period, we may conclude that it was not in a very flourishing state in the other parts of this island. This art appears to have been almost quite lost among the posterity of the ancient Britons, after they retired to the mountains of Wales. The chief palace of the kings of Wales, where the nobility and wise men assembled for making laws, was called the *white palace*, because the walls of it were woven with white wands, which had the bark peeled off (59). By the laws of Wales, whoever burnt or

(54) W. M. Inf. l. 2. p. 32.

(55) Anderson's Hist. Commerce, v. 1. p. 90.

(56) W. M. Inf. l. 3. J. Poffin, p. 16.

(57) Bede's Hist. Abbot. Weremouth p. 297.

(58) Archaeologia by the Society of Antiquaries, London, p. 29, 120, 121.

(59) Leger's Waller, p. 6.

destroyed



destroyed the king's hall or palace, was obliged to pay one pound and eighty pence, besides one hundred and twenty pence for each of the adjacent buildings, which were eight in number, viz. the dormitory, the kitchen, the chapel, the granary, the bake-house, the store-house, the stable, and the dog-house (60). From hence it appears, that a royal residence in Wales, with all its offices, when these laws were made, was valued at five pounds and eighty pence of the money of that age, equal in quantity of silver to sixteen pounds of our money, and in efficacy to one hundred and sixty. This is certainly a sufficient proof of the meanness of these buildings, which were only of wood. Even the castles in Wales, in this period, that were built for the security of the country, appear to have been constructed of the same materials; for the laws required the king's vassals to come to the building of these castles with no other tools but an axe (61). These observations, and many others of the same kind that might be made from the ancient laws of Wales, serve to confirm the opinion of a very ingenious modern writer,—that there were few or no stone buildings in Wales before the reign of Edward I. of England (62).

The arts of building do not seem to have been much better understood by the Scots and Picts than by the ancient Britons, in the former part of this period. When Finan, the second bishop of Lindisfarne, built a church of wood in that island A. D. 652, he is said to have done it *more Scotorum*, after the manner of his countrymen the Scots; and it hath been already observed, that Naitan king of the Picts was obliged to bring masons from Northumberland, when he resolved to build a church of stone in his dominions A. D. 710 (63). After this last period, it is probable that the Picts, and perhaps the Scots, began to learn and practise the art of masonry; because there are still some stone buildings of a very singular construction, and great antiquity, to be seen in Scotland. These buildings are all circular, though of two kinds, so different from each other, that they seem to be the works of different ages and of different nations. The largest of these structures are in a very extraordinary

State of  
masonry  
in Scot-  
land.

(60) *Leges Wallicæ*, p. 263, 167.

(61) *Id.* p. 167.

(62) Observations on the Welsh Castles, by the Honourable Daines Barrington, in *Archæologia*, p. 278.

(63) *Eclæ. Hist. Ecclæ.* l. 3. c. 25. l. 5. c. 21.

taste of architecture; of which I have heard of no examples in any other part of the world. They are thus described by a modern antiquary, who viewed them with no little attention: ' Having arrived at the barrack of  
 ' Glenelg, I was conducted to the remains of those stupendous fabrics, seated about two miles from thence,  
 ' in a valley called *Glenbeg*, in which four of them anciently stood. Two of these are now almost quite demolished; the third is half fallen down; the fourth is almost entire. The first I met with lies towards the  
 ' north side of the valley, and is called *Castle Chalomine*, or *Malcom's castle*. It stands upon a considerable eminence, and affords us a fine prospect of the island of  
 ' Sky, and a good part of the sea-coast. The foundation of this only appears; as also of that other, on the  
 ' east end of the valley, called *Castle Chonel*. About a quarter of a mile further, upon the bank of a rivulet,  
 ' which passes through the middle of the glen, stands the third fabric, called *Castle Tellwe*. I found it composed of stones, without cement; not laid in regular  
 ' courses, after the manner of elegant buildings, but rudely, and without order: those toward the base  
 ' were pretty large, but ascending higher they were thin and flat, some of them scarce exceeding the thickness of  
 ' an ordinary brick. I was surprised to find no windows on the outside, nor any manner of entrance into the fabric, except a hole towards the west, at the base, so very  
 ' low and narrow, that I was forced to creep in upon hands and knees, and found that it carried me down  
 ' four or five steps below the surface of the ground. When I was got within, I was environed betwixt two  
 ' walls, having a cavity or void space, which led me round the whole building. Opposite to the little entry,  
 ' on the outside, was a pretty large door, in the second or inner wall, which let me into the area or inner court.  
 ' When I was there, I perceived that one half of the building was fallen down, and thereby had the opportunity of seeing a complete section thereof. The two  
 ' walls join together at the top, round about, and have formed a large void space or area in the middle. But  
 ' to give a more complete idea of these buildings, I shall describe the fourth, called *Castle Troddan*, which is by  
 ' far the most entire of any in that country; and from  
 ' whence

‘ whence I had a very clear notion how these fabrics were originally contrived. On the outside were no windows, nor were the materials of this castle any wise different from those of the other already described, only the entry on the outside was somewhat larger: but this might be occasioned by the falling of the stones from above. The area of this makes a complete circle; and there are four doors in the inner wall, which face the four cardinal points of the compass. These doors are each eight feet and a half high, and five feet wide, and lead from the area into the cavity between the two walls, which runs round the whole building. The perpendicular height of this fabric is exactly thirty-three feet; the thickness of both walls, including the cavity between, no more than twelve feet; and the cavity itself is hardly wide enough for two men to walk abreast; the external circumference is 178 feet. The whole height of the fabric is divided into four parts or stories, separated from each other by thin floorings of flat stones, which knit the two walls together, and run quite round the building; and there have been winding stairs of the same flat stones ascending betwixt wall and wall, up to the top. The undermost partition is somewhat below the surface of the ground, and is the widest; the others grow narrower by degrees, till the walls close at the top. Over each door are nine square windows, in a direct line above each other, for the admission of light; and between every row of windows are three others in the uppermost story, rising above a cornice, which projects out from the inner wall, and runs round the fabric (64).’ From this description of these singular edifices, it plainly appears, that they were designed both for lodging and defence; and considering the state of the times in which they were built, they were certainly very well contrived for answering both these purposes.

The stone edifices of the other kind, which were probably erected in this period, and of which some few are still to be seen in Scotland, are not so large as the former, but more artificial. They are slender, lofty, circular towers, of cut stone, laid in regular rows, between forty and fifty feet in external circumference, and

Circular  
towers.

(64) Gordon's *Itinerarium Septentrionale*, p. 166.

from seventy to a hundred feet high, with one door some feet from the ground (65). They are exactly similar to the round tower of Ardmore, and several others, in Ireland; and therefore were probably built about the same time, which was in the tenth century; and for the same purposes; which are believed by some to have been for the confinement of penitents while they were performing penance. On this account these towers are always found in the neighbourhood of churches both in Scotland and Ireland; and are said to have been used in this manner: ‘The penitents were placed in the uppermost story of the tower (which commonly consisted of five or six stories); where having made probation, or done penance, such a limited time, according to the heinousness of their crimes, they then were permitted to descend to the next floor; and so on by degrees, until they came to the door, which always faced the entrance of the church, where they stood to receive absolution from the clergy, and the blessings of the people (66).’ A tedious process, to which few penitents in the present age would willingly submit. Other writers are of opinion, that the design of these circular towers (of which one is still remaining at Abernethy and another at Brechin) was to be places from whence the people were called to public worship by the sound of a horn or trumpet, before the introduction of bells (67).

It is quite improper to spend much time in investigating the state of the carpenters and cabinet-makers arts, and other artificers who wrought in wood, in this period; as few or no specimens of their workmanship are now remaining. In general, we may be certain, that these artificers were very numerous, as almost all edifices, both public and private, as well as various kinds of furniture, arms, tools, &c. were made of wood; and amongst these there were, no doubt, some in each branch who excelled in their respective arts. The clearest positive evidence of this is still remaining; of which it will be sufficient to give one example: ‘With this wood the nave of the church of Croiland was built, and the tower constructed of strong and lofty beams, most exactly joined together, before the death of abbot Turki-

(65) Gordon's *Itinerarium Septentrionale*, p. 165.

(66) *Archæologia*, vol. 1. p. 307. (67) *Id.* vol. 2. p. 80—85.



‘tull. After the death of that abbot, his successor, Egelric, built many beautiful edifices of the same materials. In particular, he erected an infirmary for the monks, of a proper length and breadth, with a chapel;—a bath, with other necessary houses;—a hall, and two large chambers, for the accommodation of strangers;—a new brew-house, and a new bake-house;—very large granaries, and stables. All these edifices were constructed of beams of wood and boards, most exactly joined, and most beautifully polished, by the admirable art of the carpenter, and covered with lead (68).’

As metals are more durable than wood, the state of the metallic arts is a little better known. The plumbers art must have been well understood in this period, as all the churches, and other edifices that were built of stone, were covered with lead; and even many of those that were constructed of wood. Artificers who wrought in iron were highly regarded in those warlike times; because they fabricated swords, and other offensive arms, as well as defensive armour. Every military officer had his smith, who constantly attended his person, to keep his arms and armour in order (69). The chief smith was an officer of considerable dignity in the courts of the Anglo-Saxon and Welsh kings; where he enjoyed many privileges, and his weregeld was much higher than that of any other artificer (70). In the Welsh court, the king’s smith sat next the domestic chaplain, and was entitled to a draught of every kind of liquor that was brought into the hall (71).

As all the clergy were taught some mechanic art, and were obliged by the canons to exercise it at their leisure hours, many of them wrought in metals of different kinds, in which they became the most expert and curious artists (72). The famous St. Dunstan archbishop of Canterbury, who governed both church and state with the most absolute sway, was the best blacksmith, brazier, goldsmith, and engraver of his time. ‘He had an admirable genius (says his historian) for various arts, and particularly excelled in writing and engraving letters,

Arts of working in silver, gold, and jewels.

(68) Ingulf. Hist. Croiland.

(69) Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 25.

(70) Leges Wallice, p. 66.

(71) Id. ibid.

(72) Johnson’s Canons, vol. 1. A. D. 960. c. 51. A. D. 994. c. 3.

‘and in making any thing he pleased, in gold, silver, brass, and iron (73).’ Many trinkets made by this illustrious mechanic were long preserved in the church, as the most precious relics, and objects of the highest veneration. ‘O miserable man that I am! (cries Osbern,) I confess that I have seen some of those works which he had made, that I have touched them with my sinful hands, have set them before my eyes, besprinkled them with my tears, and adored them on my bended knees (74).’ Among the various artists collected by Alfred the Great, there were not a few who wrought in gold and silver, who, with the instructions of their royal master, performed several works in these precious metals, of incomparable beauty (75). The truth of this assertion of the historian is abundantly confirmed by that most beautiful jewel, of exquisite workmanship, that was found at Ethelinge in Somersetshire; where this great prince concealed himself in his distress, and where he sometimes resided in his prosperity. This jewel was made by the command and direction of Alfred (as appears from the inscription upon it in the Saxon language and letters, to this purpose;—‘Alfred commanded me to be made),’—and was certainly worn by that prince. It is a thin plate of gold enamelled, and most exquisitely engraved with various figures, of an oblong form, a little more than two inches long, and a little more than one inch broad; of which the reader may find long and minute descriptions in the work quoted below (76). There is the clearest and most authentic evidence, that gold and silver were wrought into plate, coronets, bracelets, and various other ornaments and utensils, both before and after the age of Alfred the Great. The famous bishop Wilfrid, who flourished about two centuries before Alfred, is said to have incurred much envy by his magnificence, and particularly by his great quantities of silver plate (77). Queen Elgiva, the wife of king Ethelred, presented a chalice and patten of fine gold, weighing thirteen marks, about two pounds and a half, to the church of Canterbury; and his second wife, queen Emma, gave many

(73) *Anglia Sacra*, t. 2. p. 94.(74) *Id.* p. 96.(75) *After. Vita Alfred.* p. 17.(76) *Philosophical Transactions*, Number 247. *Hicckesii Thesaur.* t. 1. p. 142. *Wotton's Conspectus*, p. 19.(77) *Eddii Vita Wilfridi*, c. 24.

ornaments of gold and silver to the church of Winchester (78). But besides the gold and silver plate in the possession of the church, of which every convent and cathedral had a considerable quantity, many private persons had various ornaments and trinkets of these precious metals, such as coronets, chains, bracelets, half-circles for dressing their hair upon, collars, cups, &c.; as appears from their testaments, which are still preserved (79). Even the arts of polishing and setting precious stones were not quite unknown in England at this period: for Alfred the Great, having received a quantity of these from India (in the manner that shall be related in the next chapter), had them polished, and formed into jewels; some of which were remaining in the cathedral of Shereburn when William of Malmesbury wrote his history of the bishops of that see (80). The arts of gilding wood and metals with gold and silver were also known and practised. Stigand bishop of Winchester is said to have made a very large crucifix, and two images, the one of the virgin Mary, and the other of the apostle John, and to have gilded them all, together with the beam on which they stood, with gold and silver, and set them up in the cathedral of Winchester (81). The English goldsmiths in this period were so famous for their excellence in their art, that the curious caskets, adorned with gold, silver, and precious stones, in which the relics of the saints were kept, were made in England, and known by the name of *Opera Anglica* (English works) (82). The art of making gold and silver thread for weaving and embroidering was not unknown in this period, as will by and by appear. In one word, some pieces of workmanship were executed in gold and silver, in those rude times, that would be admired in the present age; of which it will be sufficient to give one example: among the furniture of Charlemagne, there were four tables, three of silver, and one of gold, all of extraordinary magnitude and weight. One of the silver tables was square, and beautifully enchased with a plan of the city of Constantinople; another of them was round, and

(78) *Monasticon*, vol. i. p. 2. *Anglia Sacra*, t. i. p. 290.

(79) *Hicessii Dissertatio Epistolaris*, p. 51.

(80) *W. Malmf. de Gestis Pontificum Angl.* l. 2.

(81) *Anglia Sacra*, t. i. p. 293.

(82) *Murator. Antiq.* t. 5. p. 12.

on it the city of Rome was represented in the same manner; the third, which was much larger and heavier, and of more admirable workmanship than the other two, contained, within three circles, a representation of the whole world, in figures most exquisitely minute and fine (83). How inestimable would the value of these tables be, if they were still remaining! Such of our readers as are desirous of knowing in what manner the artificers of those ancient times performed many of their most curious operations, in gilding and staining metals, ivory, wood, parchment, &c. may find a very ample collection of their receipts in the work quoted below (84).

**In Wales.** If we may depend upon the authority of their laws, even the people of Wales, notwithstanding their poverty, and the low state of the arts amongst them, were not unacquainted with gold and silver plate in this period. By one of these laws, an insult or injury offered to the king of Aberfraw was to be compensated in this manner: The guilty person, besides a certain number of cows, according to the extent of his estate, was to give to the king whom he had affronted, a silver rod, as thick as his little finger, that would reach from the ground to his mouth when he sat in his chair; together with a gold cup, that would contain as much liquor as he could drink at once, with a cover as broad as his majesty's face; and both the cup and cover were to be of the thickness of a ploughman's thumb-nail, or the shell of a goose's egg (85). This law certainly made it very imprudent to affront his majesty of Aberfraw, especially if he happened to have a long breath and a broad face. But if the people of Wales had really such pieces of plate amongst them in those times, they were probably imported, and not manufactured by themselves.

**Arts of clothing.** Though some of the arts employed about clothing are frequently carried much further than necessity requires, and were so in this period; yet it seems to be most proper, for preventing confusion, to consider them all in this place under the division of the necessary arts.

**Not necessary to trace these** None of the nations who inhabited this island at the arrival of the Saxons, were ignorant of the most essen-

(83) Egenhard. *Vita Caroli Magni*. sub fin.

(84) Muratori *Antiquitates Medii Aevi*, t. 2. p. 366—387.

(85) *Leges Walliae*, p. 10.



tial branches of the clothing-arts. It hath been made arts to appear already, that the Britons, Scots, and Picts, under- their ori- stood the arts of dressing both wool and flax, spinning them into yarn, and weaving them into cloth of various kinds and colours (86). Nor have we the least reason to suspect, that the Saxons were unacquainted with any of these essential operations at their arrival in Britain, as there is not the least surmise in history, that they were more imperfectly clothed than other nations. It will not therefore be necessary to trace any of these arts again to their origin, but only to take notice of such improvements as were made in them in the course of this period, and of such new inventions as were introduced.

We have no evidence, that any of the British nations, Art of em- at the beginning of this period, understood the arts of broiery. weaving various figures of men, or other animals, or flowers, foliages, &c. into cloth, or of embroidering them upon it after it was woven; but there is the clearest proof, that these very elegant and ingenious arts were practised in England before the end of the seventh century. In a book written by Aldhelm bishop of Sherburn, about A. D. 680, in praise of virginity, he observes, that chastity alone did not form an amiable and perfect character, but required to be accompanied and adorned by many other virtues; and this observation he illustrates by the following simile, taken from the art of weaving; — ‘As it is not a web of one uniform colour and texture, without any variety of figures, that pleaseth the eye, and appears beautiful; but one that is woven by shuttles, filled with threads of purple, and many other colours, flying from side to side, and forming a variety of figures and images, in different compartments, with admirable art (87).’ These figures were sometimes embroidered upon the cloth, with threads of gold, silver, and silk, of purple and other colours, as the nature of the figures to be formed required; and to render them the more exact, they were first drawn, with colouring matter, by some skilful artist. In the life of St. Dunstan, we are told, that a certain religious lady, designing to embroider a sacerdotal vestment, earnestly intreated Dunstan (who was then a young man, and had an excel-

(86) See vol. 1.

(87) Aldhelm de Virginitate, in Bibliotheca Patrum, t. 13.

lent taste for works of that kind) to draw the figures, which she afterwards formed with threads of gold (88). The truth is, that those fine flowered and embroidered works, so much superior in art and beauty to what could have been expected in those rude ages, were commonly executed by ladies of the highest rank and greatest piety, and were designed for ornaments to the churches, and vestments for the clergy, when they performed the offices of religion. We often read in the monkish historians of those times, of queens and princesses making presents of such precious and painted vestments (as they called them) to the church (89). The four princesses, daughters of king Edward the Elder, and sisters of king Athelstan, are highly celebrated by historians for their assiduity and skill in spinning, weaving, and needle-work; which was so far from spoiling the fortunes of those royal spinsters, that it procured them the addresses of the greatest princes then in Europe (90). A work of this kind, supposed to have been executed about the end of this period, by Matilda, wife to William duke of Normandy, afterwards king of England, and the ladies of her court, is still preserved in the cathedral of Bayeux, and is an illustrious proof both of their skill and industry. This curious monument of antiquity is a piece or web of linen, only about nineteen inches in breadth, but no less than sixty-seven yards in length; on which is embroidered the history of the conquest of England by William Duke of Normandy; beginning with the embassy of Harold to the Norman court, A. D. 1065, and ending with his death at the battle of Hastings, A. D. 1066 (91). The many important transactions of these two busy years are represented in the clearest and most regular order in this piece of needle-work; which contains many hundred figures of men, horses, beasts, birds, trees, houses, castles, churches, arms, &c. &c. all executed in their due proportions and proper colours, with inscriptions over them, to throw light upon the history (92). Though queen Matilda directed this work, yet the greatest part of it was probably performed by English women: for we

(88) *Anglia Sacra*, t. 2. p. 94.

(89) *Annales Eccl. Winton.* in *Angl. Sacra*. t. 1. p. 290.

(90) *W. Malm.* l. 2. p. 26.

(91) *Memoires de Literature*, tom. 9. 12.

(92) *Memoires de Literature*, tom. 9. 12. *Montfaucon Monumens de la Monarchie Francoise*, t. 1. p. 371, &c.

are told by a cotemporary writer, that the Anglo-Saxon ladies were so famous for their skill in needle-work, and embroidering with gold, that those elegant manufactures were called *Anglicum opus* (English work) (93).

It hath been already proved, that the people of this island, were not unacquainted with the arts of dying wool, yarn, and cloth, several different colours, in the former period; yet it seems probable, that these arts received considerable improvements in the period we are now delineating (94). In particular, the art of dying the scarlet colour, by the help of a small insect of the kermes or cochineal kind, appears to have been discovered about A. D. 1000 (95). Art of dying scarlet.

The furrier's art, or the art of dressing the skins of animals, without taking off the hair or wool, was much improved in this period; because furs of all kinds were much worn, and highly valued for their warmth and beauty (96). The furrier's art.

Though silk was worn by persons of high rank and great wealth, and also used for altar-cloths, &c.; yet as we have no evidence that it was manufactured in England in this period, this is not the proper place to speak of it (97). Art of making silk.

Besides the fine needle-works and embroideries above described, which were executed chiefly by the ladies, various kinds of woollen cloths were fabricated by the professed artificers of Britain in this period, for the use of all the different ranks in society. We are even told by a writer who flourished in those times, that the English makers of cloth very much excelled in their several arts (98). This seems to be confirmed by the price of wool, which was higher than it is at present, in proportion to the prices of other commodities. For the fleece, by some of the Anglo-Saxon laws, was valued at two-fifths of the price of the whole sheep (99). It must, however, be confessed, that it is quite impossible, at this distance of time, and with the imperfect lights afforded us by our ancient writers, to give a particular account of the texture and properties of all the different kinds of cloth that were fabricated in England in this remote period. Arts of making woollen cloths.

(93) Gul. Pictavenf. p. 211.

(94) See vol. 1.

(95) Murat. Antiquitat. t. 2. p. 415.

(96) Id. p. 409.

(97) See chap. 7.

(98) Gul. Pictavenf. p. 211.

(99) Wikins Leges Saxon. p. 23.

Art of  
war.

The art of war must continue to be ranked among the necessary arts, until all nations become so wise and equitable as to content themselves with their own territories and possessions, without invading those of others. This was very far from being the case in Britain in the period we are now considering, which was almost one continued series of invasions, wars, and plunderings, from the beginning to the end. In such unhappy circumstances, the study and practice of the arts of war became necessary to the preservation of the several British nations, and on that account merit a little of our attention.

Among  
the Brit-  
ton, Scots,  
and Picts.

It is sufficient to refer the reader to what hath been already said concerning the manner of forming and commanding the armies of the ancient Britons, Scots, and Picts; because no changes seem to have been made by them in these particulars in the present period (100). Their arms and way of fighting were also much the same, except that war-chariots were wholly laid aside, and defensive armour came more into use among their princes and great men, in imitation of other nations, and particularly of the Anglo-Saxons. By the laws of Wales, all the fighting men were obliged to take the field, as often as they were called upon by the king, to defend their country when it was invaded; but they were not under any legal obligation to attend their prince in a foreign expedition above once in the year, nor to continue in it above six weeks (101). They were also bound to assist, as often as they were called upon, in building, repairing, and defending the royal castles (102). But these castles, as hath been already observed, were very slight, and constructed only of wood.

Among  
the Anglo-  
Saxons.

The founders of the several Anglo-Saxon kingdoms in this island were a kind of soldiers of fortune, followed by armies of bold intrepid youths, whose arms were their only riches, and war their only trade and chief delight. To this martial spirit, which they derived from their ancestors the ancient Germans, they owed all their success in Britain; and they procured all their settlements by their swords, to which they had no other right. The same martial spirit and military arts were necessary to preserve their acquisitions, both from the ancient possessors, and from other adventurers like themselves, par-

(100) See vol. I.

(102) *Id.* *ibid.*

(101) *Leges Wallicæ*, p. 71, 165.



ticularly the Danes. These circumstances made the study and practice of the arts of war of the greatest importance to the Anglo-Saxons, and rendered their military arrangements objects of curiosity to their posterity.

All the freemen and proprietors of land among the Anglo-Saxons, except the ministers of religion, were trained to the use of arms, and always ready to take the field. To this they were not only led by their ancient customs and warlike dispositions, but compelled by the necessity of their circumstances, and the obligation of their laws. For every soldier in their victorious armies, when he received his proportion of the conquered country as the reward of his toils and valour, became bound to three things (commonly called the *trinoda necessitas*), which were esteemed indispensably necessary to the public safety and common good (103). The first and most important of these three services, to which all proprietors of land, and even all freemen of any considerable property, were subjected, was called in the Saxon language *furthfare*, or *outgoing*; which signified their taking the field with all necessary arms, whenever an army was to be formed for the defence of their country. This they were obliged to do under the severe penalty of forfeiting their lands, if they had any, and paying a heavy fine if they had no lands (104). The second of these services, which all freemen and proprietors of land were obliged to perform, was also of a military nature, and consisted in building, repairing, and defending the royal castles (105). To enable them to perform these services, all freemen and landholders were obliged to be constantly possessed of such arms as were necessary and suitable to their rank, which they were neither to sell, nor lend, nor pledge, nor alienate from their heirs (106). That they might be expert in the use of these arms when they were called out to actual service, the freemen of each tithing, hundred, and county, were appointed to meet at certain stated times and places for the exercise of arms; and there was to be one general review of all the arms and armed men in all the counties of England upon one day in the month of May, that there might be no

All the freemen among the Anglo-Saxons were warriors.

(103) Reliquiæ Spelman. p. 19.

(104) Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 23. Spelman Concil Britan.

p. 520.

(105) Id. ibid.

(106) Leges Edwardi Regis, apud Wilkins, p. 205.

possibility of imposing upon the public by lending arms to each other (107). In a word, the freemen among the Anglo-Saxons, like their ancestors the ancient Germans, came to their hundred and county courts, and other public meetings, in arms; for which reason these meetings were commonly called *weapon-tacks*, or *the touch of arms*; because every one touched the spear of the chief magistrate, who was present, with his spear, in token of his submission to his authority, and readiness to fight under his command (108). So much were they accustomed to the use of arms, that a spear in his hand was an essential part of the dress of an Anglo-Saxon thane or gentleman, by which he was distinguished, and without which he never stirred abroad. This is the reason that we meet with so many laws to prevent their doing mischief by wearing their spears in a careless manner (109).

Clergy exempted from the obligation of bearing arms.

The ministers of religion, both among the Pagan and Christian Saxons, were exempted from all military services, and forbidden the use of arms. The Pagan Northumbrians imagined their high-priest Coifi was become mad, when they beheld him riding on a horse, with a spear in his hand, like a secular thane; 'because they knew that it was not lawful for a priest to bear arms, or ride upon a horse (110).' The Christian clergy, after the conversion of the Saxons, enjoyed the same exemption from military services, and were laid under the same prohibition of bearing arms, that they might not be diverted from a constant attention to the duties of their sacred function (111). But the lands that were granted to the church by kings and others, especially in the former part of this period, were subjected to the same military services with others, which the clergy performed by their ceorls or free tenants (112).

Slaves not permitted to bear arms.

As the bearing of arms was esteemed the most honourable of all employments by the Anglo-Saxons, and all the other nations of Europe in this period, their numerous slaves were excluded from that honour, and from all military services, except in cases of the greatest national distress and danger (113). But when a slave was made

(107) *Leges Edwardi Regis*, apud Wilkins, p. 205.

(108) *Id.* p. 203.

(109) Wilkins *Leges Saxon.* p. 42.

(110) *Bedæ Hist.* l. 2. c. 13.

(111) *Spelman Concil.* p. 238.

(112) *Reliquiæ Spelman*, p. 19.

(113) *Mura. cr. Antiq.* l. 2. p. 445.

free, a spear was put into his hand as one mark of his freedom, and he was thenceforward permitted to bear arms, and subjected to military services (114).

From the above account of the military forces of the several Anglo-Saxon states, it plainly appears, that they consisted of all the freemen of those states who were of a proper age for bearing arms, the clergy alone excepted. This is no doubt the reason that we hear of such numerous armies raised even by the smallest nations of the heptarchy: for when a war broke out, the whole nation was up in arms, except such as were not capable, or had no right to bear them. After the establishment of the English monarchy, these martial regulations seem to have been relaxed, and the military forces of the nation gradually diminished.

The civil and military government of the Anglo-Saxons were perfectly similar, and executed by the same persons. The king was commander in chief of the whole army; an office which he commonly executed in person, but sometimes by a substitute, who was called the *cynings hold*, or *heretoga*, i. e. leader of the army (115). The alderman, or heretoga, of each county, commanded the troops of the county, which formed a complete battalion; and were subdivided into trithings, commanded by the trithingmen; and these into hundreds, commanded by the hundredaries; and these again into tens, commanded by the decennaries, who were commonly called *sithcundmen* or *conductors*, when they acted in their military capacity (116).

The Anglo-Saxon troops were of two kinds, infantry and cavalry. The infantry were composed of the ceorls, or lowest rank of freemen; and the cavalry of the thanes, or freemen of greater property, who could afford to purchase and maintain their horses. The infantry were not all furnished with the same offensive weapons, some being provided with spears, others with axes, others with bows and arrows, and not a few with clubs, besides swords, that were common to them all. Few of the infantry had any other defensive armour than small round shields, with sharp spikes in their centres, which they wore on the left arm, and with which they wounded

Reason of the numerous armies among the Anglo-Saxons.

Military government.

Troops and armies of the Anglo-Saxons.

(114) Murator. Antiq. l. 2. p. 445.

(115) Spelman Gloss. p. 288.

(116) Somner Diction. Saxon. in verb.

their enemies, as well as defended themselves. The cavalry were more uniformly armed, with long spears, which they carried in their right hands, and swords, which hung by a belt at their left sides. They were also much better provided with defensive armour; having, besides their large oval shields, which they wore on their left arms, helmets on their heads, and cuirasses, or coats of mail, on their bodies. The helmets of the Anglo-Saxons were of a conical shape, without vizors, or any other protection to the face, than a piece of iron which reached from the front of the helmet to the point of the nose. The swords, both of the infantry and cavalry, were very long and broad; blunt at the point, and designed only for cutting. The saddles of their horses were of a very simple construction, all of them without cruppers, and many of them without stirrups. The above description of the arms of the English in this remote period of their history, is chiefly taken from the representation of their army at the battle of Hastings, in the famous tapestry of Bayeux (117). All the different bodies of troops of which an Anglo-Saxon army was composed, had standards, very much resembling those of the cavalry in modern Europe (118). Some of the most ancient of our Anglo-Saxon kings were so fond of those military standards, that they had them carried before them when they travelled through their territories, even in times of peace (119).

Anglo-Saxon youth trained to the use of arms, &c.

We have good reason to believe, that the Anglo-Saxon youth were carefully trained to the dexterous use of their arms, and management of their horses, as well as instructed in the way of marching in regular order, and performing the necessary evolutions at their weapon-tacks and military reviews. ‘ All the northern nations  
 ‘ (says Olaus Magnus) are exceedingly expert and dex-  
 ‘ trous in handling their arms when they come to an en-  
 ‘ gagement; because their youth are frequently exercised  
 ‘ in mock-fights, with swords, spears, bows and arrows,  
 ‘ and other arms (120). When the troops are assembled  
 ‘ for a military expedition, they are first divided into  
 ‘ their several distinct bodies, with their proper standards,  
 ‘ under their respective leaders, who explain to them  
 ‘ the causes of the war; represent, in the strongest

(117) See *Memoires de l'Academie des Inscriptions*, t. 12.

(118) *Ibid.*

(119) *Beo. Hist. Eccles.* l. 2. c. 16.

(120) *Historia Olai Magni*, n. 7. c. 6. p. 234.



‘ colours, the cruelty and injustice of their enemies, and  
 ‘ the necessity of their fighting boldly for the honour of  
 ‘ their country; and promise them their full share of all  
 ‘ the booty that shall be taken; after which they march  
 ‘ with great alacrity and good order (121).’ The Anglo-  
 Saxon armies were generally attended in their marches  
 by a great number of carts or waggons loaded with arms  
 and provisions, and sometimes with their wives and  
 children; and with these waggons they surrounded their  
 camps in the night, which served as a fortification (122).

When they came to action, which was generally as soon as they could find their enemies, they drew up their troops in various ways, according to the nature of the ground, the posture of the adverse army, or the particular views of their commanders; though they commonly formed their spearmen into a figure called a *sow's-head* or *hollow wedge*, presenting the sharpest point of it to the enemy (123). This figure, which was much used by the Franks, Saxons, and all the other northern nations, is thus described by an ancient writer: ‘ They  
 ‘ form their troops into the figure of a wedge, or of  
 ‘ the Greek letter  $\Delta$ ; the point of which towards the  
 ‘ enemy is very sharp, and the sides gradually diverge,  
 ‘ by which it becomes broadest at the rear. The ranks  
 ‘ of all the three sides are very compact; and the men,  
 ‘ standing with their faces outwards, and their backs  
 ‘ towards the empty space in the middle, form a kind of  
 ‘ rampart with their shields (124).’ When an army was composed of several distinct battalions, or the troops of several different counties, under their respective aldermen and inferior officers, they often formed as many of these hollow wedges as there were battalions, at proper intervals (125). This was certainly a very prudent regulation; for each of these bodies being composed of the inhabitants of the same county, fought bravely for the honour of their county, and in defence of their friends and neighbours. The cavalry of each county formed one squadron, and were commonly drawn up in the front of the infantry. The waggons of the army, with the arms, provisions, women, children, sick and wound-

Manner of  
drawing  
up their  
armies,  
and of  
engaging.

(121) *Historia Olai Magni*, l. 7. c. 6. p. 224.

(122) Cluver. *Antiq.* l. 1. c. 50. p. 319.

(123) Agathias, l. 2.

(124) Cluver. *Antiq. German.* l. 1. c. 50.

(125) *Id. ibid.* p. 321.

ed, were placed in a line in the rear, with proper guards, and made a kind of rampart for its defence. While these dispositions were making, there were frequently single combats between the boldest champions of each army, or skirmishes between flying parties; in which feats of the greatest bravery and dexterity were exhibited. When both armies were ready for action, the commanders in chief, and other officers, made short animating speeches; and the signal of battle being given by the sound of trumpets, horns, &c. the troops on both sides advanced, with martial songs, loud shouts, and clashing of arms, which made a most terrible and tremendous noise (126). The first shock between the cavalry of the two contending armies was ordinarily very furious; after which the archers, and then those armed with spears, swords, battle-axes, clubs, &c. came to action; the battle raged, and blood streamed from ten thousand wounds. In this way of fighting, much depended on bodily strength and intrepidity; and when two armies were nearly equal in numbers and valour, battles were very long and very bloody. As the rage of the combatants was much inflamed by the length and violence of the struggle, the victors made a dreadful havoc among the fugitives, and spared few that they could destroy: nor was it uncommon, especially among the Danes, to put their prisoners to death in cold blood, and with the most cruel tortures (127). It would be easy to illustrate and confirm every particular in the above description, by examples taken from our history in this period; but this would be as tedious as it is unnecessary.

Great  
number of  
battles  
fought in  
this pe-  
riod.

The number of battles that were fought in this period in England, to say nothing of skirmishes, is almost incredible; and therefore we may reasonably suppose, that this pernicious art of shedding human blood was brought to greater perfection than other arts that were more useful and beneficent. We learn from the best authority, that king Ethered, and his brother Alfred, fought no fewer than nine pitched battles, besides many skirmishes, against the Danes in one year (871) (128). The truth is, that war not only raged almost without interruption

(126) Claver. Antiq. German. l. i. c. 50. p. 324, &c.

(127) Chron. Saxon. p. 73. 80, &c.

(128) Id. p. 81.

in those unhappy times, but also appeared in its most horrid aspect, and was productive of the most deplorable calamities, especially to the vanquished. For victorious armies too often did not content themselves with the destruction of those who had opposed them in the field, but wreaked their vengeance also on defenceless slaves, women, and children.

The observations which have been already made on the civil, may be applied to the military architecture of the Anglo-Saxons. They were both very imperfect; and for that reason it will not be necessary to spend much time in delineating their methods of fortifying, defending, and attacking strong places. The Saxons, in the course of their long wars against the Britons, destroyed many of the fortifications that had been erected by the Romans; and after their settlement in Britain, they neglected to repair those that remained, or to build any of their own. By this means, this country became almost quite open and defenceless; which greatly facilitated the incursions of the Danes, who met with little obstruction from fortified places. Alfred the Great seems to have been the first of the Anglo-Saxon kings who was sensible of this defect, and endeavoured to provide a remedy. That admirable prince, after he had reduced the Danes, and restored the tranquillity of his country, spent much of his time and revenues in repairing the ruined walls of London and other cities, and in building forts in the most convenient places, for the protection of his subjects. ‘What shall I say (cries his historian) of the cities which he repaired, and of the royal forts and castles which he built of stone and wood with admirable art; in doing which he met with much opposition and trouble from the indolence of his people, who could not be persuaded to submit to any labour for the common safety? How often, and how earnestly, did he beseech, intreat, and at length command and threaten, his bishops, aldermen, and nobles, to imitate his example, and build castles for the defence of themselves, their families, and friends? But, alas! such was their invincible sloth and inactivity, that all his persuasions, commands, and threats, had little influence upon them; and they either did not build at all, or did not begin to build till it was too late, and their enemies came upon them

Arts of  
fortifying  
strong places.

‘ them before their works were finished. It is true, indeed, when they beheld their parents, wives, children, friends, and servants, killed or taken prisoners, and their goods and furniture destroyed, they bewailed their own folly, and applauded the prudence of their sovereign, which they had before reproached (129).’ His own daughter Elfreda, governess of Mercia, seems to have been the only person in the kingdom who properly complied with the commands, and imitated the example, of her illustrious father. For that heroic princess, who inherited more of the wisdom and spirit of Alfred than any of his children, not only fought many battles against the Danes, but also built many castles to check their incursions. In Henry of Huntington, we have the names of no fewer than eight castles that were built by Elfreda in the short space of three years (130). From this time, the building, repairing, and defending castles, became an object of public attention, and one of the three services to which all the lands of England were subjected. When we reflect on the low state of the arts, and particularly of architecture, among the Anglo-Saxons, we cannot suppose that their castles were either very strong or very beautiful. They generally consisted of two parts, a bas-court, and a keep or dungeon. The bas-court was a piece of ground, sometimes about an acre in extent, surrounded with a high and thick stone wall, with a garreted parapet on the top; from whence the garrison discharged their weapons on the assailants. This wall had also many small windows, or rather slits, in it, very narrow in proportion to their height, through which they shot their arrows. The lodgings for the officers and soldiers were built in the area, and along the inside of the wall. At one end of the bas-court was a round mount, sometimes artificial, and sometimes natural, on which the keep or dungeon stood, which was a circular stone building, with thick and high walls. From the top of this building, which was flat, the garrison had an extensive prospect of the surrounding country, that they might discover the approaches of their enemies; and from thence also the chief defence was made. The body of the keep, which sometimes consisted of several stories, contained the lodgings of the commander of the

(129) *Asser. de Rebus gestis Alfredi*, p. 17, 18.

(130) *Hen. Hunt. Hist.* p. 204.



castle; and in the bottom was the prison, under ground, and without light; from whence the whole building was often called the dungeon. Such was the general plan of the Anglo-Saxon castles; though the different tastes of their builders, situations of the ground, and other circumstances, sometimes occasioned considerable deviations from this plan (131). The vestiges of Danish castles, or rather camps, are still visible in many parts of Britain, of a circular form, surrounded with ditches and ramparts; but do not merit a more particular description in a general history (132).

The arts of fortifying and attacking towns and castles commonly improve or decay together, and bear a due proportion to each other; and therefore, though the Anglo-Saxon castles above described must appear to us exceedingly weak and artless, they afforded no less advantage and security to their defenders, than the most regular fortifications do to theirs in the present age; because the modes of attacking them were feeble and artless in the same degree. For the most part, they were attempted to be taken by a sudden bold assault; by wounding and killing their defenders with stones, arrows, darts, and spears; by scaling their walls, and bursting open their gates, or setting them on fire. These are the methods which we see practised in the attack of a castle, in the famous tapestry of Bayeux (133). When the defenders of a town or castle were disposed to surrender, the commander, putting the keys of it on the point of his spear, reached them over the wall; and from thence they were taken by the general of the besieging army (134). If the assailants were repulsed, they seldom returned to the charge, or persisted in their enterprise; for we meet with very few sieges of any length in the Anglo-Saxon history. Alfred the Great seems to have been the only person who had any idea of a blockade, or confining a garrison within their walls, cutting off their supplies, and obliging them to surrender for want of provisions (135). A great variety of military engines were invented in the middle ages, for battering the walls of towns and castles, and for throwing

Arts of  
attacking  
strong places.

(131) See Dr. Borlase's *Antiquities of Cornwall*, l. 4. c. 9.

(132) *Id.* l. 4. c. 8.

(133) *Memoires de Literature*, t. 12. p. 400. (134) *Id.* *ibid.*

(135) *Chron. Saxon.* p. 95.

stones of a prodigious weight, which were the artillery of those times; but we have not sufficient evidence, that those engines were used in Britain in this period; and therefore it is not proper to introduce the account of them in this place (136). The truth is, that the arts of fortifying, defending, and besieging places of strength, were very much improved by the Normans; which will render this part of the military art more worthy of a minute investigation in the third volume of this work.

**General** Such seems to have been the state of the necessary arts  
**observati** in this island, and particularly among the Anglo-Saxons,  
**on on the** in this period. The fondest admirers of antiquity will  
**state of the** not deny, that all these arts were very imperfect, in  
**necessary** comparifon of what they had been in provincial Britain in  
**arts.** the Roman times, and of what they are at present.

**The fine** It is now proper to take a short view of the state of  
**arts.** the fine or pleasing arts of sculpture, painting, poetry, and music.

**Sculpture** If the sculptor's and statuary's art doth not owe its  
**among the** origin, it certainly owes its greatest improvements, to idolatry.  
**Pagan** Nations who worship images naturally encourage  
**Saxons.** those amongst them who have any taste or genius for the art of making them; and those artists as naturally exert all their skill in making the objects of worship in as perfect a manner as possible. As the Anglo-Saxons, at their settlement in this island, were idolaters, they had probably some amongst them who had the art of carving in wood, or cutting in stone, the images of their gods, Woden, Thor, Frea, &c. though in a rude and clumsy style. That they had idols or statues of their imaginary deities in their temples, we have the clearest evidence in the letter written by pope Boniface to Edwin king of Northumberland, A. D. 625. These idols are spoken of at great length, and he is exhorted to destroy them (137). When Coifi, the chief priest of the Northumbrian Saxons, was converted to Christianity, A. D. 627, he overturned the altars, and broke down the statues of their gods, in the great temple at Godmundham near York. The shapes of the statues of the Anglo-Saxon deities, with their various emblems, are still preserved in several authors (138).

(136) Murator. Antiq. t. 2. p. 473.

(137) Bede Hist. Eccles. l. 2. c. 10.

(138) Ailet Sanimes Britan. Antiq. p. 446. Verstegan's Restitution, &c.

When the Anglo-Saxons were converted to Christianity, in the course of the sixth and seventh centuries, their idols were destroyed, and the art of making them not only neglected as useless, but abhorred as impious. But that art did not long continue in a state of neglect and detestation. For the images of the saints having been introduced into many of the Christian churches on the continent, it was not long before they found their way into some of the churches in this island. At first these images were imported from Rome, probably because there were no artists in Britain who could make them; but by degrees, as the demand for them increased, the art of making them was revived (139). As very few specimens of the Anglo-Saxon sculpture are now remaining, we cannot form an exact judgment of their taste and manner. In general, we may conclude, that their works, like those of their cotemporary artists of France and Italy, were awkward, stiff, and flat (140). For when the art of masonry was so imperfect as it hath been represented, it is not to be imagined, that the art of sculpture had attained to any great degree of perfection. Those who have an opportunity of viewing the figures in basso-relievo, on the baptismal font at Bridekirk in Cumberland, or those on the pillar in the church-yard of Buecaille, in the same county, or those on the obelisk in the church of Ruthwel in Annandale, which were all cut in this period by the Dano-Saxon inhabitants of those parts, will probably be of this opinion.

The painters, as well as sculptors, of the ages we are now considering, were chiefly employed in working for the church, by drawing pictures of our Saviour, the Virgin Mary, the apostles, and other saints. This practice of adorning churches with pictures, begun in the East, was early introduced at Rome, and from thence spread into all the other countries of Europe where Christianity was established (141). The first pictures that were used for the ornament of the Anglo-Saxon churches in this island were brought from Rome. Benedict Bishop, the founder of the monastery of Weremouth, as we are told by venerable Bede, imported great numbers of these pictures from Rome, for the use of the church of

Among the Anglo-Saxons after their conversion to Christianity.

Paintings imported.

(139) Bedæ Hist. Abbat. Weremuthen. p. 295. 297.

(140) See Montfaucon Monumens, t. 1. Murator. t. 2. dissertat. 24.

(141) Du Pin. Hist. Eccles. cent. 4. in Epiphan.

his monastery. ‘ In his fourth voyage, A. D. 678, he brought from Rome many pictures of the saints, for the ornament of the church of St. Peter, which he had built, viz.—a picture of the Virgin Mary, the mother of God,—and the pictures of the twelve apostles, which he hung up in the body of the church, on a partition of wood from the south to the north wall;—pictures of the gospel-history, with which he decorated the south wall;—and pictures of the visions of St. John in the Apocalypse, with which he adorned the north wall;—that all the people who entered this church, though ignorant of letters, might contemplate the amiable aspect of Christ and his saints in these pictures, wherever they turned their eyes (142).’ Benedict having built another monastery at Iarrow, and dedicated the church of it to St. Paul, made another journey to Rome, to procure ornaments for his new church and monastery, A. D. 685. ‘ Benedict having constituted Estlerwin abbot of his monastery of St. Peter at Weremouth, and Ceolfrid abbot of his monastery of St. Paul at Iarrow, made a fifth journey to Rome; from whence he returned with a great treasure of sacred things, as usual; particularly a great number of religious books and pictures: for at this time he brought pictures of the whole gospel-history, with which he covered the walls of the chapel of the Blessed Virgin, which he had built in his larger monastery at Weremouth. For the ornament of the church of St. Paul, in his monastery of Iarrow, he brought pictures of the concord of the Old and New Testaments, executed with wonderful art and wisdom. For example, the picture of Isaac carrying the wood on which he was to be sacrificed, and the picture of Christ carrying the cross on which he was to be crucified, were placed next to each other; and in like manner, the serpent lifted up by Moses in the wilderness, and the Son of Man lifted up on the cross (143).’ From the above account, given by one who spent his whole life in the monasteries of Weremouth and Iarrow, and daily saw the pictures which he describes, it plainly appears, that these two churches in the north of England, in the seventh century, were adorned, not only with many single por-

(142) Bed. Hist. Abbat. Weremuth. p. 295.

(143) Id. ibid.



traits, but also with a considerable collection of historical paintings; and if we were as well informed of the state of some other churches, we should perhaps find, that they were no worse provided in these ornaments.

As the veneration and demand for the pictures of the saints increased, the inconveniency of bringing them all from foreign countries was sensibly felt; and therefore such of the English, particularly of the clergy, as had a taste for painting, applied to that art, in order to furnish their own churches with these admired ornaments.

Paintings  
executed  
in Eng-  
land.

The famous St. Dunstan, who seems to have been an universal genius, was esteemed an excellent painter by his cotemporaries, and employed his pencil only on religious subjects (144). A picture of Christ, drawn by this sainted artist, with his own picture prostrate at its feet, and several inscriptions in his own hand-writing, are still preserved in the Bodleian library (145). So necessary were the pictures of the saints believed to be, that no church could be consecrated without some relics, and the picture of the saint to which it was dedicated. At the first introduction of these pictures into the Anglo-Saxon churches, it was pretended, that they were intended only to be helps to devotion, and a kind of books for the instruction of those who could not read the scriptures; and it was with these views that venerable Bede contended for their lawfulness and expediency (146). But the veneration of the people for these pictures did not long stop here, but gradually increased to the most gross and impious idolatry; which occasioned a prodigious demand for these objects of devotion, and no doubt brought the art of painting to greater perfection in this period than many of the other arts. Portraits of other persons besides canonized saints, particularly of the dignified clergy, appear to have been very numerous.

‘Styward (says William of Malmſbury) was appointed abbot of Glastonbury A. D. 981. The pictures of this abbot are a sufficient proof that his manners were very suitable to his name. For in all these pictures he is represented with a whip or rod for discipline in his hand (147).’ Even history-paintings, representing the

(144) *Anglia Sacra*, t. 2. p. 94.

(145) *Hicceſii Theſaur.* t. 1. p. 144.

(146) *Bede Opera*, t. 8. de Templo Salomonis, c. 19.

(147) *W. Malmſ. Antiq. Glaſton.* apud Gale, t. 1. p. 317.

principal actions of the lives of great princes and generals, do not seem to have been very uncommon in England in this period. Edelfleda, widow of the famous Brithnod duke of Northumberland, in the tenth century, presented to the church of Ely, ‘a curtain, which had  
‘ the history of the great actions of her deceased lord  
‘ painted upon it, to preserve the memory of his great  
‘ valour and other virtues (148).’

Painting  
on glass.

The arts of colouring and painting glass were probably known and practised in England in the ages we are now considering. If we could be certain, that the figures of Alfred the Great, and of his grandson Athelstan, in the window of the library of All-Souls College at Oxford, had been brought from Beverley, where they had been painted not long after the age in which these princes flourished, we should have an opportunity of judging of the state of that curious art in this period (149). In that large collection of receipts for performing various works of art, in the eighth century, preserved in the work quoted below (150), there are directions for staining glass several different colours, in order to form figures and pictures of Mosaic work.

Art of poetry much  
cultivated  
in this period.

But of all the pleasing arts, poetry was the most admired and cultivated by all the nations of Britain, in the ages we are now delineating. In the fifth chapter of the first volume of this work, we have attempted to account for that strong propensity to the sublime and ardent strains of poetry which hath appeared in all nations, in the most early period of their history, when they were emerging from the savage state (151). Whatever becomes of that account, the fact is undeniable; and is confirmed by the ancient history of all those nations of Germany and Scandinavia, from whom the Anglo-Saxon and Dano-Saxon inhabitants of Britain derived their origin, as well as by that of the Celtic tribes (who possessed the warmer regions of Europe), from whom the ancient Britons were descended. This poetic fire was not extinguished by the chilling blasts, and almost eternal frosts, of the north; but burnt with as intense a flame under the arctic circle as under the equator. The truth is, that the mountains of Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and even Iceland,

(148) Hist. Ellen. l. 2. c. 7.

(149) Vita Ælfredi a Spelman. tab. 2.

(150) Murator. Antiq. t. 2. p. 570.

(151) See vol. i.

were the favourite seats of the Muses in this period; and from some of those countries they accompanied their votaries into this island. ‘ All the ancient inhabitants of the north (says an excellent antiquary) composed, in rhymes and verses, accounts of all things that deserved to be remembered, either at home or abroad, that they might be more easily instilled into the minds of men, might make the deeper impressions on their memories, and be more effectually handed down to posterity (152).’ Every bold adventurer, when he set out on any piratical or military expedition, if he was not a great poet himself, which was frequently the case, never neglected to carry with him the best poets he could procure, to behold and celebrate his martial deeds (153). We may be certain, therefore, that all the leaders of the several armies of Saxons, Angles, Jutes, and Danes, who formed settlements, and erected kingdoms, in this island, brought their poets with them, to sing their exploits and victories. The most ancient of those historical and military songs have been long since lost; but we have good reason to believe, that it is to them we owe many particulars in the most ancient part of our history. Some of our historians honestly confess, that they had no other authority for what they related but those ancient poems; and one of those songs, on the great victory which Athelstan obtained over the Scots and Danes A. D. 938, is inserted *verbatim* in the Saxon Chronicle, and literally translated by Henry of Huntington (154). Another of those ancient poems, on the death of king Edgar, and the succession of his son Edward, A. D. 975, is inserted in the same chronicle (155).

Never were poetry and poets so much admired and honoured as in the present period. The greatest princes were no less ambitious of the laurel than of the royal crown. Alfred the Great was the prince of poets, as well as the best of kings, and employed his poetic talents to enlighten the minds and civilize the manners of his subjects (156). Aldhelm, who was a prince of the royal family of Wessex, and bishop of Sherburn, was also

Poetry and  
poets  
greatly  
honoured  
in this  
period.

(152) Olai Wormii Literatura Danica, p. 176.

(153) Id. p. 195.

(154) Wil. Malmf. p. 3. Chron. Saxon. p. 112. Hen. Hunt.

p. 204.

(155) Chron. Saxon. p. 122.

(156) Vita Elfredi, p. 92.

the best poet of his age; and his poems were the delight and admiration of the English several centuries after his death (157). Canute the Great was also a famous poet; and the first stanza of a song composed by him may be seen in the work quoted below (158). Poets were the chosen friends and favourites of the greatest kings; they seated them at their tables, advanced them to honours, loaded them with riches, and were so much delighted with their sweet and lofty strains, that they could deny them nothing. ‘We the bards of Britain, whom our prince entertaineth on the 1st of January, shall every one of us, in our rank and station, enjoy mirth and jollity, and receive gold and silver for our reward.— Happy was the mother who bore thee, who art wise and noble, and freely distributest rich suits of garments, thy gold and silver. Thy bards celebrate thee, for presenting them thy bred steeds, when they sit at thy tables. I myself am rewarded for my gift of poetry, with gold and distinguished respect. Should I desire of my prince the moon as a present, he would certainly bestow it on me (159).’ The poets of the north were particularly famous in this period, and greatly caressed by our Anglo-Saxon kings. ‘It would be endless (says an excellent antiquary) to name all the poets of the north who flourished in the courts of the kings of England, or to relate the distinguished honours and magnificent presents that were heaped upon them (160).’ The same writer hath preserved the names of no fewer than eight of those Danish, Norwegian, and Icelandic poets, who flourished in the court of Canute the Great, king of Denmark and England, and enjoyed the favour of that prince (161). It seems to have been one of the chief amusements of the greatest princes in this period to hear the poems of their bards, to read their works, and even commit their verses to memory. Alfred the Great, as we are told by his intimate friend and companion Asserius, amidst that infinite multiplicity of affairs in which he was engaged, never neglected to spend some part of his time every day in getting Saxon poems by heart, and teaching them to

(157) *Anglia Sacra*, t. 2. p. 4. (158) *Hist. Eliens.* l. 2. c. 27.

(159) *Specimens of Ancient Welsh Poetry*, p. 34. 36.

(160) *Olui Wormii Literatura Danica*, p. 195.

(161) *Id.* p. 243.



others (162). This too was also a very capital part of the education of the royal and noble youth of those times (163).

The poems of those ancient bards of the north are said to have produced the most amazing effects on those who heard them, and to have roused, or soothed, the most impetuous passions of the human mind, according to the intention of their authors. Revenge, it is well known, rages with the greatest violence in the hearts of warlike fierce barbarians, and is of all their passions the most furious and ungovernable; and yet it is said to have been subdued by the enchanting power of poetry. Egil Skallagrim, a famous poet of those times, had quarrelled with Eric Blodox, king of Norway; and in the course of that quarrel had killed the king's son, and several of his friends; which raised the rage of Eric against him to the greatest height. Egil was taken prisoner, and sent to the king, who was then in Northumberland. No sooner was he brought into the presence of the enraged monarch, who had in his own mind doomed him to the most cruel tortures, than he began to sing a poem which he had composed in praise of his royal virtues, and conveyed his flattery in such sweet and soothing strains, that they procured him not only the forgiveness of all his crimes, but even the favour of his prince (164). The power of poetry is thus poetically described in one of their most ancient odes: 'I know a song by which I soften and enchant the arms of my enemies, and render their weapons of none effect. I know a song which I need only to sing when men have loaded me with bonds; for the moment I sing it, my chains fall in pieces, and I walk forth at liberty. I know a song useful to all mankind; for as soon as hatred inflames the sons of men, the moment I sing it they are appeased. I know a song of such virtue, that were I caught in a storm, I can hush the winds, and render the air perfectly calm (165).'

Those ancient bards who had acquired so great an ascendant over the minds of their ferocious countrymen, must certainly have been possessed of an uncommon portion of that poetic fire, which is the gift of nature, and cannot be acquired by art. This

Astonishing power of poetry.

The poets of nature, and not of art.

(162) *Affer. de Rebus gestis Alfredi*, p. 13. (163) *Id. ibid.*

(164) *Olai Wormii Literatura Danica*, p. 195.

(165) *Bartholin*, p. 347. *Northern Antiquities*, vol. 2. p. 217.

is directly asserted by one who was well acquainted with their works: ‘ In other languages, any person of common understanding may make verses of some kind; and, by constant practice, may even become expert at making them: but in our Dano-Saxon language, no man can become a poet of the lowest order, by any efforts, unless he is inspired with some degree of the true poetic flame. This sacred fire, like all the other gifts of nature, is bestowed in very unequal measures. There are some who can compose excellent verses by the help of thought and study; while others, blessed with a greater portion of the true poetic spirit, pour forth a torrent of verses of all kinds with perfect ease, without premeditation. This happy genius for poetry discovers itself even in infancy, by such manifest indications, that it cannot be mistaken, and is observed to be most ardent about the change of the moon. When a poet of this high order and fervid spirit is speaking of his art, or pouring out his verses, he hath the appearance of one that is mad or drunk. Nay, the very external marks of this poetic fury are in some so strong and obvious, that a stranger will discover them at first sight to be great poets, by certain singular looks and gestures, which are called in our language *Skall-wiingl*, i. e. the poetical vertigo (166).’

Curious  
account of  
one of  
those an-  
cient  
poets.

Venerable Bede gives a very curious account of a Saxon poet, called *Cadmon*, a monk in the abbey of Streaneshalch (now Whitby) in the seventh century, who exactly answered the above description. The most sublime strains of poetry were so natural to this ancient bard, that he dreamed in verse, and composed the most admirable poems in his sleep; which he repeated as soon as he awoke. A part of one of those poems is preserved in king Alfred’s Saxon version of Bede’s history, and is much admired by those who are most capable of forming a right judgment of its merit (167). Bede gives a Latin translation of the exordium of this poem, but confesseth that it falls far short of the beauty of the original; for it is impossible (says he) to translate verses that are truly poetical, out of one language into another, without losing much of their original dignity and spi-

(166) Olai Wormii *Literatura Danica*, p. 193.

(167) Bed. *Hist. Eccles. Saxonice reddita*, p. 597. *Hickefii Thesaur.* t. i. p. 197.

‘rit (168).’ For this reason, I shall not attempt an English translation of this curious fragment. Cædmon was a man of low birth, and little or no learning, but possessed so great a portion of that divine enthusiasm with which the true poet is inspired, that he turned every thing he heard into the sweetest verses, without any toil or effort. As he was a monk, and, according to the mode of those times, a pious man, he employed his poetic talents only on religious subjects, and composed poems on all parts of the Old and New Testament. ‘He sung (says Bede) the creation of the world,—the origin of mankind, and the whole history of the book of Genesis,—the deliverance of the Israelites out of Egypt,—their taking possession of the land of promise, and many other scripture-histories. He sung of the incarnation, passion, resurrection, and ascension of our Saviour; of the giving of the Holy Ghost, and the preaching of the apostles. In a word, he composed poems on the divine blessings and judgments,—on the terrors of the last day,—on the joys of heaven,—the pains of hell,—and on many other religious subjects, to deter men from the love of vice, and excite them to the love and practice of virtue (169).’ All the works of this ancient poet of nature are unhappily lost, except the small fragment above mentioned, which is the most venerable relic of the Dano-Saxon language and poetry. For the learned Dr. Hickes is of opinion, that the poetical paraphrase on the book of Genesis, published by Junius as Cædmon’s, is not really the work of that ancient bard (170).

The language of the Saxon, Danish, and other northern poets, was highly figurative and metaphorical; but those figures and metaphors were not the arbitrary inventions of every particular poet, but established by ancient and universal practice. This prevented, in some measure, that obscurity, which so constant a succession of strong figures would otherwise have occasioned. Rogvald, earl of the Orkney isles, who was a famous poet as well as a great warrior, compiled a kind of dictionary of those established figures and metaphors, for the use both of poets and their readers, which he entitled the

Language  
of those  
ancient  
poets.

(168) Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. 4. c. 24.

(169) Id. ibid.

(170) See the most perfect copy of this fragment in Wanley Catalog. Lib. Septentrional. p. 287.

*Poetical Key* (171). Many of those poetical metaphors were taken from the ancient Pagan theology and mythology of the northern nations. For example,—heaven was ‘the scull of the giant Imar;’—the rainbow was ‘the bridge of the gods;’—gold was ‘the tears of Freya;’—poetry, ‘the present, (or) the drink of Odin;’—the earth, ‘the spouse of Odin, the flesh of Imar, (or) the daughter of Night;’—a battle, ‘the hail of Odin,’ &c. All these, and many others of the same kind, were allusions to particular fables in the Edda (172). But the far greatest number of these poetical metaphors were taken from the appearances, properties, and uses of natural objects. Thus, herbs and plants were ‘the hair of the earth, (or) the fleece of the earth;’—the sun, ‘the candle of the gods;’—the sea, ‘the field of pirates, the girdle of the earth, the country of whales;’—ice, ‘the greatest of bridges;’—a ship, ‘the horse of the waves;’—a combat, ‘the bath of blood, (or) the clang of bucklers;’—arrows, ‘the birds of war, (or) the snakes of war;’—soldiers, ‘the wolves of war;’—the tongue, ‘the sword of words;’—the soul, ‘the treasure of the breast, (or) the keeper of the bony house,’ &c. &c. (173). But after all, this profusion of metaphors, and other figures, together with the very involved arrangement of the words, of which many are purely poetical, and never used in prose, render the style of the Saxon, Danish, and other northern poets, not a little obscure to the greatest proficients in those languages among the moderns, though perhaps it appeared sufficiently clear to their cotemporaries.

Rules of  
versificati-  
on.

The rules and measures of the versification of the ancient Saxon and Danish poets, are still more obscure, if not quite inexplicable. This is owing to the great singularity, prodigious artifice, and almost endless variety of the kinds and measures of their verses. ‘The different kinds of verses (says one of the best judges) composed by the Saxon, Danish, and Icelandic poets, were almost innumerable; for such was the greatness and fertility of their genius, that there was no end of

(171) Olai Wormii *Literatura Danica*, p. 125.

(172) *Northern Antiquities*, vol. i. p. 395.

(173) *Northern Antiquities*, vol. i. p. 395. *Hicckesii Thesaur.* t. i. p. 199.

‘ their



‘ their inventions. It may, however, be observed, that  
 ‘ the number of the different kinds of verses commonly  
 ‘ used by these poets, did not exceed one hundred and  
 ‘ thirty-six, without including that kind in which our  
 ‘ modern poets so much delight, which consists wholly  
 ‘ in ending every two lines with similar sounds. The  
 ‘ harmony of these different kinds of verses did not con-  
 ‘ sist only in the succession of long and short syllables,  
 ‘ according to certain rules, as among the Greeks and  
 ‘ Romans; nor in the similar sounds of the terminating  
 ‘ syllables, as among the moderns; but in a certain  
 ‘ consonancy and repetition of the same letters, syllables,  
 ‘ and sounds, in different parts of the stanza, which  
 ‘ produced the most musical tones, and affected the  
 ‘ hearers with the most marvellous delight (174)’.

Our ears, being quite unaccustomed to these ancient modes of versification, cannot be susceptible of the im-  
 pressions of their harmony but in a very imperfect de-  
 gree; and therefore a very particular account of them  
 would neither be pleasing nor instructive. It may not,  
 however, be improper to gratify the curiosity of our read-  
 ers, by laying before them the rules of one of these  
 kinds of verse, which will enable them to form a gene-  
 ral idea of all the rest. The kind of verse most proper  
 for this purpose, is that which was called *Drotquet*, or  
*common song*, being that which was most commonly used  
 in singing the praises of their kings and heroes. This  
 kind of verse was constructed in the following manner.

Rules of  
 the drot-  
 quet, or  
 common  
 song.

Each verse or line consisted of six syllables, each dis-  
 tich of two lines, and each stanza of four distichs, or  
 eight lines.

The harmony of this kind of verse in each distich was  
 partly literary and partly syllabical.

The literary harmony consisted in this, that three  
 words in each distich should begin with the same letters,  
 two in the first line of the distich, and one in the second.  
 These initials were called the sonorous letters.

The syllabical harmony consisted in this, that there  
 should be two syllables of similar sounds in each line,  
 which were called the sonorous syllables.

This syllabical harmony was either perfect or imper-  
 fect. It was perfect when the similar syllables consisted

both of the same vowels and consonants ; imperfect when they consisted of the same consonants, but not of the same vowels. The syllabical harmony might be imperfect in the first line of a distich, but it was always to be perfect in the second.

All these rules are illustrated and exemplified in the two following Latin lines, which form a distich of the drot-quæt or common song of the Danes and Saxons. The sonorous letters and syllables are in capitals, that they may be more readily distinguished.

“CHRISTUS CAPUT nOSTRUM  
“CORONET te BONIS.”

In this distich C is the sonorous letter, and begins two words in the first line, and one in the second. In the first line, IST and OST are the two sonorous syllables, but imperfect, consisting of the same consonants, but not of the same vowels. ON and ON are the sonorous syllables in the second line, being perfect, as consisting both of the same vowels and consonants, all agreeable to the above rules. Four such distichs formed a complete stanza of the drotquæt ; of which the reader will find several examples, as well as a more minute description, in the learned and curious work so often quoted on this subject (175).

Great variety of verification.

It is easy to perceive, from the above example, that this alliterative and syllabical harmony was capable of almost endless variations, by changing the length of the verses, the number and position of the sonorous letters and syllables, and by other methods. This gave the Saxon and Danish poets great opportunities of displaying their genius, by producing so many different species of verse. Nor was this kind of harmony, arising from the repetition and artful disposition of similar sounds and letters, peculiar to the scalds or poets of England and Scandinavia ; but was cultivated, in some degree, by those of all the other nations of the world of whom we have any knowledge. Of this a thousand examples might easily be produced, in various languages ; but the reader will probably be satisfied with a few from the most celebrated Latin poets, which he will find in a note (176).

This

(175) Olai Wormii Literatura Danica, in Append.

(176) O Tite ! tute Tati tibi tanta tyrannæ talissi. *Ennius*.

Non potuit paucis plura plane proloqui. *Plautus*.

Libera lingua loquuntur ludis liberalibus. *Nævius*.

This mode of versification continued to be occasionally <sup>Example</sup> used by the poets of England long after the conclusion of <sup>in English.</sup> the period we are now examining. The following example, from the visions of Pierce Plowman, published about the middle of the fourteenth century, may be taken both as an illustration and a proof of this. This specimen will be found to approach very near to the rules of the *drotquæt* or common song above described, but deviates a little from them, and thereby shews what small variations produced a new kind of verse.

“ In a fomer season,  
 “ When hot was the sun,  
 “ I shope me into shroubs  
 “ As I a shope were,  
 “ Inhabit as an harmet,  
 “ Unholy of werkes,  
 “ Went wyde in this world  
 “ Wonders to heare (177).”

Besides this alliterative harmony, the Saxon and Danish poets are believed to have had as strict a regard to the harmonious succession of long and short syllables as those of Greece and Rome; which afforded them another mean of multiplying their modes of versification. Their language was much better fitted for this kind of harmony than modern English, as it had not near so great a proportion of words of one syllable, and as its quantities were much better fixed and ascertained (178). Had a great regard to quantities.

‘ The Anglo-Saxons (says one of the greatest critics), conscious of the dignity, elegance, sweetness, and harmony, of their language, were much addicted to poetry. That kind of verse in which they most delighted was the Adonian (consisting of one long, two short and two long syllables), though they sometimes deviated a little from the strict rules of that measure. For as the Greek and Latin poets, when they wrote iambics, did not always adhere to the strictest laws of that kind of verse, but made use of various liberties; so the An-

*Thesea cedentem celeri cum classe tuetur. Catullus.*

*Duñores Dan ãm delecti prima virorum. Lucretius.*

*Pectora lausa cavis, et colla comantia pectunt. Virgilius.*

*Vide plura apud Hickesii Thesaur. t. 1. p. 195, 196.*

(177) See Relics of ancient English Poetry, second edit. vol. 2. p. 269, &c.

(178) Hickesii Thesaur. t. 1. p. 188.

‘ glo-

‘ glo-Saxon and Dano-Saxon poets allowed themselves  
 ‘ equal liberties in composing their Adonics (179).’ The  
 truth is, that a very great number of the Anglo-Saxon  
 verses now remaining are Adonics, or something very  
 like them (180).

Used  
 rhymes.

Though the Saxon, Danish, and other northern scalds,  
 had no fewer than one hundred and thirty-six different  
 kinds of verse, without including rhyme, there is the  
 clearest evidence, that they were not unacquainted with  
 this last species of versification. To say nothing of their  
 introducing rhyme into their Latin poetry, there are not  
 a few of their poems in their own language still extant,  
 which are most exactly rhymed, and some of them have  
 even double rhymes (181). So many different methods  
 had the ancient poets of Britain and Scandinavia, of  
 pleasing the ears, and delighting the imaginations of their  
 countrymen, while those of modern Europe are limited  
 to a very few !

British  
 poets.

All the observations that have been made above, con-  
 cerning the versification of the Saxon scops or poets, and  
 of the northern scalds (182), may be applied to the bards  
 of Wales and Scotland in this period. For though the  
 languages in which the scalds and bards sung their tune-  
 ful strains, were as different as it is possible for any two  
 languages to be ; yet there appears to have been a very  
 surprising similarity between their modes of versification,  
 both being exceedingly various, and chiefly of the alli-  
 terative kind. Whether this similarity was owing to the  
 Welsh bards having imitated the Saxon scops and Danish  
 scalds (as some imagine), or to something in nature, and  
 the state of society, which directed them all to pursue  
 the same course (as others fancy), it is not easy to deter-  
 mine (183). The poetic genius of the provincial Britons  
 was much depressed during their long subjection to the  
 Romans ; but it revived when they recovered their liber-  
 ty, and shone forth in its meridian lustre, when they  
 were engaged in their long and bloody struggle with the

(179) Wanleii Catalog. in Prefat. sub fin.

(180) Hiccesii Thesaur. t. 1. p. 189, &c.

(181) Northern Antiquities, vol. 1. p. 399.

(182) The Saxon name for a poet was *scop* or *scenp*, from the  
 verb *sceoppian*, ‘ to shape (or) make ;’ the Danish name was *scald*,  
 from *scaldre*, ‘ to polish.’

(183) See Northern Antiquities, vol. 2. p. 196, &c.

Saxons.



Saxons (184). The bards then raised their voices, and roused their countrymen to fight bravely in defence of their country, their liberty, their parents, wives, children, and religion, by the most animating strains. It was in this period (the sixth century) that Taliesin, the king of bards, Ancurin, Llywarch-Hen, Cian, Talhiarn, and all the most famous Welsh poets flourished (185). But unfortunately the works of some of these poets are lost, and those of the others become obscure, and almost unintelligible (186).

It would swell this article beyond all proportion to enumerate and give examples of all the different kinds of poems composed by the British, Saxon, and Danish poets, of this island, in this period. The subjects of their songs were as various as their versification. To say nothing of their religious hymns, and their poems in praise of saints, which were very numerous, they inflamed the courage of combatants, and taught the battle to rage, by their martial songs: they celebrated the exploits, and sung the victories, of heroes, and preserved the memory of all great events, in their historical compositions: the beauties of the fair, and the joys and cares of virtuous love, were not forgotten: nor did they neglect to lash the vices of bad men by their satires, or to lament the sorrows of the disconsolate by their elegies, or to increase the pleasures of festivity by their mirthful glees. Examples of all these kinds of poems, and of several others, may be seen in the books quoted below (187).

Music was as much admired and cultivated as poetry by all the nations who inhabited this island in the period we are now examining. These two pleasing arts were inseparable and universal. The halls of all the kings, princes, and nobles of Britain, rung with the united melody of the poet's voice and the musician's harp; while every mountain, hill, and dale, was vocal. The poet and the musician was indeed most commonly the same person; who, blessed at once with a poetical genius, a tuneful voice, and skilful hand, sung and played the songs which he had composed. Talents so various and delight-

(184) See vol. i.

(185) Evan Evan Dissertatio de Bardis.

(186) *Ibid.*

(187) Hæckestii Thesaur. t. 2. Bartholin. de Causis cotemp. Mor. is. Ol. i. Literatura Danica. Shiffer Hist. Lapon. Five Pieces of Runic Poetry. Specimens of ancient Welsh Poetry, &amp;c.

ful were objects of ambition to the greatest monarchs, and procured the meanest who possessed them, both riches, honours, and royal favour. Alfred the Great, who united every pleasing to every great accomplishment, excelled as much in music as he did in war; and ravished his enemies with his harp, before he subdued them with his sword. 'Not long after (says one of the best of our ancient historians), Alfred ventured to leave his hiding-place in the isle of Athelney, and gave a proof of his great wisdom and dexterity. For taking his harp in his hand, and pretending to be a poet and musician, he entered the Danish camp, attended only by one faithful friend. Being admitted into the royal tent, he entertained the king and his nobles, several days, with his songs and music, and thereby had an opportunity of gaining all the intelligence he desired (183).' We learn from the same historian, that Anlaf, the Danish king of Northumberland, practised the same stratagem against king Athelstan, and almost with the same success. 'He sung so sweetly before the royal tent, and at the same time touched his harp with such exquisite skill, that he was invited to enter; and having entertained the king and his nobles with his music while they sat at dinner, he was dismissed with a valuable present (189).' The famous Egil Skillagrim, the Norwegian poet already mentioned, was so great a favourite with the same king Athelstan, on account of his musical and poetical talents, in which he equally excelled, that he loaded him with riches and honours, and could deny him nothing (190). The first musician, who was also a poet, was the eighth officer in dignity in the courts of the kings of Wales, and had a place in the royal hall next to the steward of the household (191). But it would be endless to produce all the proofs that occur in history of the high esteem in which those who excelled in music were held in the courts of the Danish, Saxon, and British princes of this period.

Music universally cultivated.

Some skill in vocal and instrumental music seems to have been necessary to every man who wished to mingle in decent company; and to be without it was esteemed disgraceful. This appears from a very curious passage

(183) W. Malms. l. 2. c. 4.

(189) Id. c. 6.

(190) Anglo-Saxon History l. 2. p. 129.

(191) Leges Waller, p. 35.

in Bede's account of the religious poet Cædmon. 'This extraordinary person was so devout and pious, that he could never make any poems on common and trifling subjects; and no strains ever proceeded out of his mouth, but such as breathed a spirit of piety and religion. Even before he became a monk, when he was in a secular state of life, in which he continued till he was of an advanced age, he never learned any of those frivolous songs that were in common use. Of these he was so totally ignorant, that when he happened to be at an entertainment, and it was proposed, as usual, that every person present should sing and play on the harp in his turn, to increase the festivity of the company; as soon as he saw the harp, which was handed about, approaching near to him, he arose, sneaked out of the company, and retired to his own house (192).'

Alfred the Great, in his Saxon version of Bede's history, suggests the reason of this conduct of Cædmon, viz. that he was ashamed to discover his ignorance of two such common accomplishments as those of singing and playing on the harp (193). Cædmon, before he became a monk, was a person in the very lowest rank of life, being employed in keeping a gentleman's cattle, under the direction of an overseer; and his companions seem to have been of the same humble station, as there was but one harp in the company. This shews how universal some skill in vocal and instrumental music was in the period we are now considering; and that these two kinds of music were inseparable. For these people seem to have had no idea of singing without playing on the harp at the same time, or of playing on the harp without singing.

It would be quite superfluous to spend any time in proving, that the harp was the favourite musical instrument of the Britons, Saxons, Danes, and indeed of all the nations of Europe, in the middle ages. This is evident from their laws, and from every passage in their history, in which there is the least allusion to music. By the laws of Wales, a harp was one of the three things that were necessary to constitute a gentleman, i. e. a freeman; and none could pretend to that character who had not one of these favourite instruments, or could not

The harp  
the most  
admired  
musical in-  
strument.

(192) Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. 4. c. 24.

(193) Id. *ibid.* a Smith. edit. p. 597. See Relics of ancient Poetry, vol. 1. p. 50.

play upon it (194). By the same laws, to prevent slaves from pretending to be gentlemen, it was expressly forbidden to teach, or to permit them to play upon the harp; and none but the king, the king's musicians, and gentlemen, were allowed to have harps in their possession (195). A gentleman's harp was not liable to be seized for debt; because the want of it would have degraded him from his rank, and reduced him to a slave. The harp was in no less estimation and universal use among the Saxons, Danes, and all the other northern nations, by whom it is supposed to have been invented (196). Those who played upon this instrument were declared gentlemen by law; their persons were esteemed inviolable, and secured from injuries by very severe penalties; they were readily admitted into the highest company, and treated with distinguished marks of respect wherever they appeared (197).

Other musical instruments.

Though the harp was the most common, it was far from being the only musical instrument that was used by the Saxons, Danes, Welsh, and other inhabitants of this island, in this period. They had indeed a great variety, both of wind and stringed instruments, which are occasionally mentioned by the writers of those times, some of which are now unknown. 'The instruments of practical music (says Bede, in his treatise on that subject) are either natural or artificial. The natural instruments are the lungs, the throat, the tongue, the palate, &c.; the artificial instruments are the organ, the violin, the harp, the atola, the psaltery, &c. &c. (198).' The trumpet, the tabor, the pipe, the flute, &c. are mentioned by the same venerable author in other parts of that treatise; and we meet with the lute, the cymbal, the citola, the lyre, the fistrum, the campanula, and several others, in the other writers of the middle ages (199). It may be questioned, whether the organ mentioned by Bede was an instrument of the same kind with that which bears this name in modern times. Some are of opinion, that it was not, but rather an instrument composed of several reeds, and blown

(194) *Leges Wallie.* p. 301.

(195) *Id.* p. 415.

(196) *Hickelii Gram. Franko. Theoretica.* p. 96.

(197) *Leges Angl. apud Lindenbrog.* p. 485.

(198) *Bede Opera.* Coloniae. 1612. p. 353.

(199) *Du Cange Gloss. in voc.*



with the mouth (200). But as there is sufficient evidence, that organs blown with bellows, and of the same construction with ours, were known in the East in the fourth century, it is not improbable, that they had made their way into Britain about the end of the seventh or beginning of the eighth age, when Bede flourished (201). That organs were erected and used in some of the principal churches in England, in this period, we have the fullest evidence. The famous St. Dunstan made a present of an organ with brass pipes, to the abbey-church of Malmesbury, from his great veneration for the memory of St. Aldhelm, the founder of that church; and to this organ a plate of brass was affixed, on which the following distich was engraved:

*Organa do Sancto Præsul Dunstanus Aldelmo,  
Perdat hic æternum qui vult hinc tollere regnum* (202).

The famous Ailwyn, alderman of all England, and founder of Ramsay abbey, expended no less than thirty pounds of Saxon money, equal in quantity of silver to ninety, and in efficacy to nine hundred pounds of our money, in building an organ, with brass pipes, in the church of that abbey (203). The people of North Wales had a musical instrument, called, in their language, a *crwd*, and, in the barbarous Latin of those times, *crotta*, which had six strings of catgut, and very much resembled the modern violin (204). It was usual on solemn occasions for a great number of singers, harpers, and players on other instruments, to sing and play in concert; and from the above enumeration, which is far from being perfect, we may perceive, that they had a sufficient number of instruments to make abundance of noise.

The most astonishing effects are ascribed to the music, as well as to the poetry, of the present period; and these effects were probably owing to the natural and happy union of both those pleasing arts, rather than to the intrinsic excellence of either of them. Olaus Magnus relates the following story as an example of the surprising power of poetry and music: ‘A certain famous scald and harper in the court of king Eric the Good used to

Astonishing effects of music.

(200) Murat. Antiq. t. 2. p. 357.

(201) Id. ibid. p. 358.

(202) W. Malmf. de Pontificibus, l. 5.

(203) Hiftor. Ramfiens. c. 54.

(204) Differtatio de Bardis, p. 82.

‘ boast, that he could raise and inflame the passions of the  
 ‘ human heart to any degree he pleased. The king,  
 ‘ partly by promises, and partly by threats, prevailed  
 ‘ upon the artist, much against his inclination, to make  
 ‘ the experiment on him and his courtiers. The scald  
 ‘ begun by singing such mournful strains, and playing  
 ‘ in such plaintive tones, that the whole company were  
 ‘ overwhelmed with sorrow, and melted into tears: by  
 ‘ and by he sung and played such joyous and exhilarating  
 ‘ airs, that they forgot their sorrows, and began to laugh,  
 ‘ and dance, and shout, and give every demonstration of  
 ‘ the most unbounded mirth: at last, changing his sub-  
 ‘ ject and his tune, he poured forth such loud, fierce,  
 ‘ and angry sounds, that they were seized with the most  
 ‘ frantic rage, and would have fallen by mutual wounds,  
 ‘ if the guards, at a signal given, had not rushed in and  
 ‘ bound them; but, unhappily, before the king was  
 ‘ overpowered, he killed no fewer than four of those  
 ‘ who endeavoured to apprehend him (205).’ Venera-  
 ‘ ble Bede, who was a philosopher, as well as a poet and  
 ‘ musician, speaks of the effects of music in his time, in  
 ‘ more temperate strains, and yet represents them as con-  
 ‘ siderable. ‘ Great is the utility of music, and its effects  
 ‘ are admirable. It is indeed of all the arts the most  
 ‘ laudable, pleasant, joyous, and amiable; and renders  
 ‘ men brave, liberal, courteous, and agreeable, by its  
 ‘ great power over their passions and affections. How  
 ‘ much, for example, doth martial music rouse the  
 ‘ courage of combatants? and is it not observed, that  
 ‘ the louder and more terrible the clangor is, the more  
 ‘ fiercely doth the battle rage? Is it not music that  
 ‘ purifies and delights the hearts of men, that dispels  
 ‘ their sorrows, and alleviates their cares, improves their  
 ‘ joys, and revives them after their fatigues? Nay, is  
 ‘ it not music that cures the headach, and some other  
 ‘ diseases, and promotes the health of the body, as well  
 ‘ as the happiness of the mind (206).’ Can we reason-  
 ‘ ably suppose, that the music of those times was contemp-  
 ‘ tible, when so wise and good a man as Bede, who was  
 ‘ so well acquainted with it, ascribes to it such effects?

Church-  
music.

After the conversion of the Saxons to Christianity,  
 they became acquainted with a new kind of music, to

(205) Hist. Olai Magni, p. 586.

(206) Opera Bede, t. i. p. 353.

which

which they had formerly been strangers. This was church-music; which, from a principle of piety, as well as from their natural taste for the tuneful arts, they cultivated with uncommon ardour. To instruct them in that music, which was very different from their own, they procured the ablest masters from Rome, and sent some of their most ingenious youth to that city for instruction. One of the most celebrated of these foreign teachers of church-music was John, the archcantor of St. Peter's at Rome, and abbot of St. Martin's in that city; who, at the request of the famous Benedict Biscop, founder of the monastery of Weremouth, was sent over by pope Agatha, A. D. 678, to teach the monks of Weremouth, and the other English monks, the art of singing the public services after the Roman manner. 'This abbot John (says Bede, who was then a young scholar in the monastery of Weremouth) taught all the monks of our monastery the art of singing; and all the monks in the other monasteries of Northumberland, who had a taste for music, came thither, and put themselves under his care. Besides this, he taught in many other places, where he was invited, and also left directions in writing for singing the service of the whole year, which are still preserved in our monastery, and of which many copies are published (207)'. Church-music was one of the chief branches of learning taught in the college of Canterbury; and professors of this music were sent from thence into all other parts of England (208). But those who were desirous of attaining to the highest degree of excellence in this kind of music, which was then one of the most admired accomplishments of the clergy, and the most certain means of preferment in the church, travelled to Rome for their improvement in it, where it was taught in the most perfect manner (209).

(207) Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 4. c. 18.

(208) Id. l. 5. c. 20.

(209) Id. *ibid*.

T H E  
H I S T O R Y  
O F  
G R E A T B R I T A I N.

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B O O K II.

C H A P. VI.

*The history of Commerce, Coin, and Shipping, in Great Britain, from the arrival of the Saxons, A. D. 449, to the landing of William Duke of Normandy, A. D. 1066.*

Importance of internal commerce.

**C**OMMERCE is no less necessary to the prosperity of particular states and kingdoms, and of the world in general, than the circulation of the blood to the health of the human body. As soon as any society is formed, in any country, under any form of government, commerce begins its operations, and circulates the natural productions of the earth,—the various animals that are used for labour, food, or clothing,—together with all those commodities that are the effects of human art and industry, among the members of that society, for the good of the whole, and of every individual. This may be called internal commerce; because its effects and operations are confined within the limits of one particular state and country. This internal commerce is always the first, and



and for some time the only commerce, that is carried on in the infancy of states and kingdoms. It is also the most constant and permanent, and, like the circulation of the blood, is never interrupted a single moment while the society subsists. The home trade, or internal commerce of a kingdom, therefore, is an object of great importance to its prosperity, and merits the attention of the historian in every period.

Though some countries are blessed with a more fertile soil and friendly climate, and abound more with the necessaries and comforts of life, than others, it may be affirmed with truth, that there is hardly any habitable country, that hath not a redundancy of some useful commodities, and a want or scarcity of others. This makes it natural for the inhabitants of every country to desire to dispose of their superfluities to procure a supply of their necessities; which can only be accomplished by opening a commercial intercourse with the inhabitants of other countries, who want what they can spare, and can spare what they want. These mutual necessities of the inhabitants of different countries, states, and kingdoms, by degrees overcome their mutual dislikes and jealousies, and give rise to an interchange of commodities, which may be called *foreign commerce*. This foreign commerce, in any country, is at first but small, extending only to contiguous states and kingdoms; but when it prospers, and is well conducted, it is gradually more and more enlarged, until it penetrates into the most distant regions, and brings home the productions of every climate. To attend, therefore, to the gradual increase, and various revolutions of the foreign trade of a commercial country, in the several periods of its history, is an object equally curious and important.

It hath been made appear, in the sixth chapter of the first book of this work, that both the internal and foreign commerce of provincial Britain were in a very flourishing condition in the Roman times (1). The natural productions and manufactures of each of the Roman provinces in this island had a free circulation into the other provinces, by means of coasting vessels, navigable rivers, and excellent highways. The superfluous corn, cattle, minerals, and manufactures, of all these

And of  
foreign  
trade.

Recapitulation of  
the state of  
commerce  
in the former  
period.

(1) See book 1. c. 6.

provinces, were exported into all parts of the Roman empire, where they were wanted, and valuable returns brought home, either in goods or cash. It hath also been observed, that both the internal and foreign trade of provincial Britain began to decline very sensibly before the end of the preceding period, the former being much interrupted by the depredations of the Scots and Picts, and the latter by the piracies of the Franks and Saxons (2). But by the final departure of the Romans out of this island, its internal commerce was reduced to the lowest ebb, and its foreign trade almost quite annihilated (3). Nor did either of these revive, in any remarkable degree, till after the establishment of the Saxon heptarchy. For in that deplorable interval between the arrival of the Saxons and their establishment, war was almost the only trade of all the British nations. But as soon as the rage of those long and bloody wars between the Britons and Saxons, began to abate, by the retreat of the former into Wales and Cornwall, and the establishment of the latter in that part of Britain which was soon after called *England*, all those nations began to pay greater attention to the arts of peace, and particularly to trade and commerce. From this æra, therefore, in the course of the sixth century, we shall begin the annals of commerce in the present period.

Anglo-  
Saxons  
neglected  
maritime  
affairs.

There are few examples in history of so sudden a change in the pursuits and employments of any people, as in those of the Anglo-Saxons, after their arrival in this island. Before that time, the sea was their favourite element, and navigation the art in which they most delighted and excelled. ‘The Saxons (says an author of the fifth century) are not only well acquainted, but perfectly familiar, with the arts of navigation, and all the dangers of the sea (4).’ But as soon as they began to form settlements in the pleasant and fertile plains of Britain, they abandoned the sea, and neglected maritime affairs for several centuries. This was partly owing to the long and obdurate resistance they met with from the Britons, which obliged them to employ all their forces at land, and to neglect the sea; and partly to the fertility of their new settlements; which, furnish-

(2) See book i. c. 6.

(3) Id. *ibid.*

(4) Simon. Apollon. l. 3. epist. 6.

ing them with all the necessaries and conveniencies of life of which they had any ideas, they remained contented at home, and no longer infested the narrow seas with their piratical expeditions. The fact, however, is undeniable, that the Anglo-Saxons, during their struggle with the Britons, and for near two centuries after, had very few ships, and almost totally neglected maritime affairs. After their several armies landed in this island, we hear no more of their fleets, which they either destroyed, or suffered to rot in their harbours. In this period, therefore, and indeed during the whole continuance of the heptarchy, the Anglo-Saxons had very little commercial intercourse with any of the countries on the continent; and that little was chiefly carried on by foreigners. Venerable Bede, who is our surest guide in this dark interval, acquaints us, ‘That the city of London, the capital of the little kingdom of Essex, was a famous emporium (probably the only one then in Britain), frequented by merchants of several nations, who came to it both by sea and land on account of trade (5).’ This seems to intimate, that London was the great centre of the British commerce in those times; to which the Anglo-Saxon merchants, from the different nations of the heptarchy, brought their goods by land, and there met with foreign merchants, who came thither by sea to purchase these goods, either with money, or with other goods, which they had brought from the continent. In this manner, the greatest part of the little trade between England and the continent was carried on till about the middle of the eighth century.

Osa king of Mercia, who mounted that throne A. D. 755, seems to have been the first of our Anglo-Saxon princes who gave any great attention to trade and maritime affairs. This great prince encouraged his subjects to fit out ships, and carry their goods to the continent in English bottoms, with a view to raise a naval power for the protection of his dominions. The other petty princes of the heptarchy, dreading the power and ambition of Osa, applied to Charlemagne, the greatest monarch who had reigned in Europe since the fall of the Roman empire, for his protection against their too powerful neighbour, of whom they made very bitter com-

Foreign  
trade re-  
vived by  
Osa king  
of Mercia.

(5) Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 2. c. 3.

plaints. This occasioned a violent misunderstanding between these two great princes, and very much interrupted the trade of England in its infancy. Charlemagne treated the English merchants, subjects of the king of Mercia, with great severity, and even denied them admission into his ports; which provoked Offa, who was a prince of a high spirit, to treat the Emperor's subjects in the same manner in England. 'I know not (says the famous Alcuinus in one of his letters) what will become of us in this country; for an unhappy contention, fomented by the malice of the devil, hath lately arisen between Charlemagne and king Offa, and hath proceeded so far, that a stop is put to all commerce between their dominions. There is a report, that I am to be sent abroad to negotiate a peace (6).' This report proved true. Alcuinus was sent abroad; and conducted his negotiation with so much address, that he not only concluded a commercial treaty between Offa and Charlemagne, but became one of the greatest favourites of that mighty monarch.

Singular  
kind of  
smug-  
gling.

There is an article in this ancient commercial treaty, which informs us of a very singular kind of smuggling that was carried on by the English merchants of those times. The emperor Charlemagne had imposed certain customs or duties on all kinds of merchandise imported into his dominions, and appointed officers in all his ports for collecting these customs. Some English merchants, in order to elude the payment of these duties, put on the habits of pilgrims, and pretended that they were travelling to Rome, or some other place, on a religious account, and that the bales which they carried with them contained nothing but provisions and necessaries for their journey, which were exempted from paying any duty. But the collectors of the customs (a suspicious unbelieving kind of men in all ages) often searched the parcels of these pretended pilgrims; and finding them to contain merchant-goods, either seized them, or imposed a heavy fine upon their owners; which occasioned loud complaints, and was one of the subjects of controversy between the two princes; Offa insisting that the baggage of all his subjects who travelled through the emperor's dominions on pilgrimages, should be allowed to pass un-

(6) W. Malmf. l. i. c. 4. p. 17.



searched. Alcuinus was not able to carry this point; which, to say the truth, was not very reasonable; but the following article was inserted in the treaty, which sufficiently secured all real pilgrims from injury: ‘All  
 ‘strangers who pass through our dominions to visit the  
 ‘thresholds of the blessed apostles, for the love of God  
 ‘and the salvation of their souls, shall be allowed to pass  
 ‘without paying any toll or duty: but such as only put  
 ‘on the habit of pilgrims, and under that pursue their  
 ‘traffic and merchandise, must pay the legal duties at  
 ‘the appointed places. It is also our will, that all mer-  
 ‘chants shall enjoy the most perfect security for their  
 ‘persons and effects under our protection, and accord-  
 ‘ing to our command; and if any of them are oppressed  
 ‘or injured, let them appeal to us or our judges, and  
 ‘they shall obtain the most ample satisfaction (7).’ Such  
 seems to have been the state of the little trade between  
 England and the continent in the times of the hept-  
 archy; carried on chiefly by foreigners, and a few Eng-  
 lish subjects, who were rather pedlars than merchants,  
 and not very famous either for their wealth or honesty.  
 So small were the beginnings of the trade of England,  
 which hath since arisen to so great a height!

The animosities that subsisted between the Anglo-Saxons and Britons, during their long and bloody wars, were too violent to admit of any trade, or the exchange of any thing, but blows and injuries. Even after these wars had subsided, by the settlement of the former in England, and the retreat of the latter into Wales, the intercourse between them was rather hostile and predatory than commercial; for the Britons, still considering themselves as the rightful owners of the fine countries from which they had been expelled, made frequent inroads into the English territories, and seized every thing they could lay their hands upon as their own property. These predatory expeditions were so far from being considered by the Britons as having any thing shameful or unlawful in them, that they were esteemed the most sacred duties, and most honourable exploits, of their greatest men; for which they were highly celebrated by their bards who attended them (8). ‘The royal bard  
 ‘shall attend the king’s domestics when they go out to

No com-  
 mercial in-  
 tercourse  
 between  
 the Anglo-  
 Saxons and  
 Welsh.

(7) W. Malmf. l. i. c. 4. p. 17.

(8) Leges Wallicæ, p. 36.  
 ‘plunder

‘plunder the English, and shall sing and play before them for their encouragement. If they meet with resistance, and a battle ensue, he shall sing the song called the *old British monarchy*.’ Many laws were made for regulating the division of the booty taken in these expeditions, between the king, the great officers of his court, and all others concerned (9). It is in vain to look for the peaceful and equitable transactions of commerce between nations who lived on this unfriendly footing; and on this footing the inhabitants of England and Wales lived till long after the conclusion of the heptarchy. The injuries which the unhappy Britons had sustained were too great to be soon forgotten by their posterity.

Commerce  
between  
the differ-  
ent states  
of the hep-  
tarchy.

Though the Anglo-Saxons were divided into several petty states and kingdoms in the times of the heptarchy, yet as they all spoke the same language, and were in reality the same people, we have no reason to doubt, that the inhabitants of different states traded sometimes with each other, when these states were not at open war. The people of some of these states were addicted to agriculture, and those of others to pasturage, which made a commercial intercourse between them for their mutual benefit. But notwithstanding this, it cannot be denied, that the political divisions of the Anglo-Saxons into so many governments, must have been a great interruption to their internal commerce, by their national jealousies and frequent wars. It is something more than an illustration of this, that though the people of England and Scotland were as near, and almost as like to each other, before they were united into one kingdom, as they have been since; yet their commercial dealings were not near so great.

Restraints  
on trade.

The internal as well as the foreign commerce of the Anglo-Saxons in the times of the heptarchy was very trifling, and lay under manifold restraints. How great a restraint, for example, must the following law have been, that was made by Lothere king of Kent, who flourished about the middle of the seventh century? ‘If any of the people of Kent buy any thing in the city of London, he must have two or three honest men, or the king’s portreeve (who was the chief magistrate of

(9) *Leges Wallice*, p. 36.

‘ the city), present at the bargain (10).’ By the same Saxon laws, no man was allowed to buy any thing above the value of twenty pence, except within a town, and in the presence of the chief magistrate, and other witnesses (11). The same regulations were laid upon bartering one commodity for another, or for mere exchange ‘ one thing for another, except in the presence of the sheriff, the mass-priest, the lord of the manor, or some other person of undoubted veracity. If they do otherwise, they shall pay a fine of thirty shillings, besides forfeiting the goods so exchanged to the lord of the manor (12).’ The design of these and several other troublesome regulations was, to ascertain the terms of all bargains, at a time when very few could write, that, if any dispute arose, there might be sufficient evidence to direct the judges in their determinations;—and also to prevent impositions of all kinds, and the sale of faulty and of stolen goods; or in case of such being sold, that the innocent party might be indemnified, and the guilty punished. These regulations, however, must have been a great interruption to all commercial dealings; and clearly shew, that internal, as well as foreign trade, was then in a very low state; and that the members of society had little knowledge of business, or confidence in each other’s honesty. By the laws of Wales, another precaution was added, to prevent the possibility of imposition, by fixing a certain legal price upon every commodity that could be the subject of commerce; and this is done in these laws, with a fullness of enumeration, and a degree of minuteness, that is truly curious and surprising (13). For example, there is in these laws a whole section, and that none of the shortest, settling the price of cats, from the moment of their birth through all the stages of life, according to their various properties (14). It is true, these laws had another view, besides regulating the prices of these commodities in sales; which was, to regulate the damages that were to be paid for them in case of their destruction. It must also have been a discouragement to internal commerce, that in those times a certain proportion of the price of all commodities bought and sold in each kingdom was payable to the

(10) Wilkins *Leges Saxon.* p. 9.(11) *Id. ibid.*(12) *Id. ibid.*(13) *Leges Wallicæ*, l. 3.(14) *Id.* p. 247, 248.

king, when it was above twenty pence; and this was another reason why their laws required, that all bargains for things above that value, should be within the gates of towns, and in the presence of the sheriff, or portreeve, who collected these duties. This custom, like many others, the Anglo-Saxons adopted from the Romans; and it was continued from the beginning to the end of this period; of which it will be sufficient to give one example. From Doomsday-book it appears, that a certain proportion of the price of every thing bought and sold within the borough of Lewis in Suffex was to be paid to the portreeve, the one-half by the buyer, and the other by the feller; and particularly, that the portreeve was to receive four-pence for every man that was sold within that borough (15).

Institution  
of fairs  
and mar-  
kets.

As we have mentioned several laws and customs in this period, which had a tendency to cramp and restrain internal commerce, it is but just to take some notice of such as were calculated to promote it. Of this kind the institution of markets and fairs at certain stated times and places was certainly one of the most effectual, as it brought buyers and sellers, and things to be bought and sold, together. This institution was not the invention of the Anglo-Saxons, but had been long established in all the provinces of the Roman empire, and was wisely continued by them, and by all the other barbarous nations who took possession of those provinces on the fall of that empire. All those nations, however, regulated their fairs and markets according to their own customs and ideas. The appointment of the times and places of those mercantile meetings was one of the royal prerogatives; and they were commonly appointed when and where there was a concourse of people on some other account. This is the reason that the weekly markets in the former part of this period were commonly at churches (which were then chiefly in towns), and on Sundays, that the people might have an opportunity of procuring necessaries for the ensuing week, when they came together for the purposes of religion; and possibly in hopes that the church would be better frequented on that account. But it was found, that this unnatural mixture of secular and religious affairs was attended with mani-



fold inconveniencies, and very hurtful to the interests of religion; and therefore many laws were made against holding markets on Sundays (16). It seems, however, to have been very difficult to change this custom, which had been long established, and was agreeable to many; for these laws were often repeated, and enforced by severe fines, besides the forfeiture of all the goods exposed to sale. At length, though these weekly markets were still kept near churches, the day was changed from Sunday to Saturday, that those who came from a distance might have an opportunity of attending divine service on the day after, if they pleased. This was a consideration of importance, when churches, being few, were at a great distance from each other. Besides these weekly markets, there were greater commercial meetings held at certain places, on fixed days of the year; which being well known, were much frequented. These too had a very intimate connection with religion, being always held near some cathedral church or monastery, on the anniversary of the dedication of the church, or on the festival of the saint to whom it was dedicated; which happened in this manner. When bishops and abbots observed that great multitudes of people came from all places to celebrate the festivals of their patron saints, they applied to the crown for charters to hold fairs at those times, for the accommodation of strangers, and with a view to increase their own revenues by the tolls which their charters authorised them to levy at those fairs (17). This contributed also to increase the crowds at these festivals, some attending them with religious, and others with commercial views; and the greater these crowds were, it was thought the more honourable for the saint, and was certainly the more profitable for the clergy. Many precautions were taken to preserve good order, and prevent theft and cheating, in these ecclesiastical fairs, some of them not a little singular. For example, when a fair was held within the precincts of a cathedral or monastery, it was not uncommon to oblige every man to take an oath at the gate, before he was admitted, that he would neither lie, nor steal, nor cheat, while he continued in the fair (18): an oath which we

(16) *Spel. Concil.* t. 1. p. 377. 404. 450. 500. 518, &c.

(17) *Murator. Antiq.* t. 2. *Dissertat.* 30. p. 862.

(18) *Id.* p. 882.

may presume was not always strictly kept! These customs, so different from our own, may appear to us ridiculous; but they were very artful contrivances of the clergy of those times, for raising the reputation and increasing the revenues of their respective churches; and also profitable to the public, by promoting commerce. Many of these ecclesiastical fairs (as they may not improperly be called) are still kept in all Popish countries; and many of our own are still held on the same saint's day to whose honour they were originally instituted.

Establishment of the English monarchy favourable to trade.

The establishment of the English monarchy, by the reduction of all the kingdoms of the heptarchy, one after another, under the dominion of one sovereign, was an event highly favourable both to the internal and foreign trade of England. It was favourable to internal trade, by putting a period to those internal wars which almost constantly raged between the petty states of the heptarchy, and by rendering the communication between the several parts of England more secure and free. It was favourable to foreign commerce, by making the English monarchy a greater object to foreign merchants, and the English monarchs of greater consideration in foreign countries. Not long after the establishment of the monarchy, alliances and intermarriages took place between the royal family of England; which opened a more free communication between this kingdom and the dominions of foreign princes. Edward the Elder, who was one of the first English monarchs, had four daughters married to the four greatest princes then in Europe; and on occasion of these marriages, many curious things were brought into England, where they had never before been seen, and other things were sent out in return; which gave rise to commercial intercourse (19).

Invasions of the Danes hurtful to trade.

The establishment of the English monarchy would have been still more beneficial to trade, if the advantages of it had not been balanced by the piracies of the Danes, and their descents upon the coasts of England, which began about the same time. These ferocious freebooters, who had never been heard of in England till near the end of the eighth century, became so formidable in the ninth, that they covered the narrow seas with their piratical fleets, and kept all the coasts in continual alarms with their invasions, which were as sudden as they

were destructive. In this period, therefore, when the Danish and Norwegian fleets rode triumphant at sea, and seized every merchant-ship that fell in their way, and when their crews landed when and where they pleased, and plundered the coasts and sea-ports, there could be little foreign trade in England. This was the state of things from A. D. 787, when the first fleet of Danish pirates plundered the coasts of England, to A. D. 875, when Alfred the Great obtained the first naval victory over these destructive rovers (20). In this unhappy interval, the fatal consequences of the long and imprudent neglect of maritime affairs were severely felt by the English; who thereby not only lost all the advantages of foreign trade, but suffered innumerable insults and calamities from their cruel invaders. Sometimes, indeed, they defeated the Danes on shore, and obliged them to fly to their ships; but during that space of eighty-eight years, they were never able to look them in the face at sea; which rendered their victories by land of little value. For whenever the Danes met with a vigorous resistance in one place, they retired to their ships, and flew like lightning to another, where the people were not so well prepared for their reception, and there took ample revenge for their former repulse.

There can be no question, that the first English monarchs, Egbert, Ethelwulph, and his three eldest sons, who were all cruelly harassed by the continual invasions of the Danes, were very sensible of the disadvantages they laboured under, for want of a sufficient fleet to meet their enemies at sea, and prevent their landing; and that they were earnestly desirous of supplying that defect. But there is nothing in the world more difficult, than to restore a naval power when it is fallen into decay, in a country where there is little foreign trade, to furnish ships, and to be a nursery for seamen; and in the face of enemies who are masters of the sea. To an ordinary genius, this must appear impracticable. What admiration then is justly due to that extraordinary prince, who not only attempted, but accomplished, that difficult undertaking; who raised a mighty naval power almost out of nothing, revived foreign trade, and wrested the dominion of the seas out of the hands of the insulting

Naval  
power and  
foreign  
trade of  
England  
restored by  
Alfred the  
Great.

(20) Chron. Saxon. p. 64. 83.

Danes? This was the great Alfred, who presents himself in so many amiable points of view, to one who studies the Anglo-Saxon history, that it is impossible not to contract the fondest and most enthusiastic admiration of his character. It is much to be lamented, that we have such imperfect accounts of the means by which this great prince accomplished the many wonders of his reign, and particularly of the methods by which he restored the naval power and foreign trade of England, when they were both annihilated. The historians of these times were wretched monks, who knew little of these matters, and thought it sufficient to register in their meagre chronicles, that such and such things were done, without acquainting us with the means by which they were accomplished. We must try, however, to make the best of the few imperfect hints which they have left us, and endeavour to set this important part of the naval and commercial history of England in as clear a light as possible.

Naval history of Alfred.

Nothing can more fully demonstrate the low state of the shipping and trade of England at the accession of Alfred to the crown, than the feebleness of the first fleet with which he encountered his enemies at sea. After four years preparation, he got together five or six small vessels, with which he put to sea in person A. D. 875; and meeting with six sail of Danish pirates, he boldly attacked them, took one, and put the rest to flight (21): a victory which, though small in itself, probably gave him no little joy, as it was gained on an element to which the Anglo-Saxons had long been strangers. His misfortunes at land, which threatened the total ruin of himself and kingdom, obliged him to suspend the prosecution of his design of raising a naval power for some time. But no sooner had he retrieved his affairs by the great victory which he obtained over the Danes at Edington A. D. 878, than he resumed his former scheme, and pursued it with redoubled ardour: and the means he employed to accomplish it were equally humane and wise. Instead of satisfying his revenge, by putting the remains of the Danish army to the sword when they were in his power, he granted them an honourable capitulation, persuaded their leaders to become Christians,

(21) Chron. Saxon. p. 85.



assigned them lands in East-Anglia and Northumberland, and made it their interest to defend that country which they came to plunder (22). With the assistance of these Danes, who had many ships, and were excellent sailors, he fitted out a powerful fleet, which Afferius tells us he manned with pirates, which was the name then commonly given to the Danes by all the other nations of Europe; and with this fleet he fought many battles against other Danish fleets with various success (23). There can be no doubt, that this wise prince put many of his own natural subjects on board that fleet, both to learn the arts of navigating and fighting ships, and to secure the fidelity of the Danes; of which he had good reason to be suspicious. Still further to increase the number of his seamen, he invited all foreigners, particularly the people of Old Saxony and Friesland, to enter into his service, and gave them every possible encouragement (24). As he well knew that a flourishing foreign trade was the best nursery for seamen, and of great advantage to the kingdom, he excited his subjects to embark in it by various means, as particularly by lending them money and ships, and by others that will be hereafter mentioned (25). By these, and probably, by other methods which have not come to our knowledge, Alfred raised so great a naval power in a few years, that he was able to secure the coasts of his kingdom, and protect the trade of his subjects.

In the midst of all these, and many other cares, Alfred encouraged foreigners that were in his service, and some of his own subjects, to undertake voyages for making discoveries, and opening new sources of trade, both towards the north and south; of which it will be proper to give some account. There is still extant a very curious relation of one of these voyages undertaken by one Ochter, a Norwegian. This relation was given by the adventurer himself at his return, and written down from his mouth by king Alfred with his own hand. The style of this precious fragment of antiquity is remarkably simple, and it seems to have been designed only as a memorandum for the king's own private use. This simplicity of style is imitated in the following translation,

(22) W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 4.

(23) Affer. p. 9.

(24) Id. p. 13.

(25) Anderson's History of Commerce, vol. 1. p. 44.

from

from the original Saxon, of that part of it which it is thought necessary to lay before the reader.

Ochter's  
voyage.

‘ Ochter informed his lord Alfred the king, that his  
‘ habitation was to the north of all the other Normans,  
‘ in that country which is washed on the north by the  
‘ western ocean. He said, that country stretched very  
‘ far towards the north, and was quite destitute of in-  
‘ habitants, except a few Finnnians, who lived in the  
‘ winter by hunting, and in the summer by fishing. He  
‘ added, that he had conceived a strong desire to exa-  
‘ mine how far that country extended towards the  
‘ north, and whether any people resided beyond that  
‘ desert; and with these views had sailed directly north-  
‘ ward, keeping the desert land on his right hand, and  
‘ the open sea on the left, for three days, when he was  
‘ as far north as the whale-fishers used to go. After  
‘ that he sailed other three days in the same course,  
‘ when he found the land make a turn towards the east;  
‘ but whether this was a great bay or not he could not  
‘ certainly tell; this he knew, that he waited there some  
‘ time for a north-west wind; by which he sailed east-  
‘ ward four days near the shore. Here again he waited  
‘ for a north wind, because the land turned directly  
‘ southward, or the sea run into the land that way, he  
‘ knew not which; but he sailed southward as far as he  
‘ could sail in five days close by the coast, when he  
‘ came to the mouth of a great river, which run up far  
‘ into the land. In this place he put an end to his voy-  
‘ age, not daring to sail up that river, because the coun-  
‘ try was well inhabited on one side of it. This, he  
‘ said, was the only well-peopled country he had met  
‘ with after he had left his own home. For during the  
‘ whole voyage, the land on his right hand was all a de-  
‘ sert, having in it only a few wandering fishers, fowl-  
‘ ers, and hunters, who were all Finnnians; on his left  
‘ hand all was open sea.

‘ He said further, That the Bearms told him, their  
‘ country was well inhabited; but he durst not go on  
‘ shore. The land of the Tirfinnians was almost a de-  
‘ sert, being inhabited only by a few fishers, hawkers,  
‘ and hunters. The Bearms, he said, told him many  
‘ things both about their own country and the neigh-  
‘ bouring countries; but whether these things were true  
‘ or not, he could not tell, because he had not seen  
‘ them

‘ them himself. He thought the Finni-ans and the Bearms spoke nearly the same language.

‘ He said he visited these parts also with a view of catching horse-whales, which had bones of very great value for their teeth; of which he brought some to the king; that their skins were good for making ropes for ships. These whales are much less than other whales, being only five ells long. The best whales were caught in his own country, of which some were forty-eight, some fifty yards long. He said, that he was one of six who had killed sixty in two days.

‘ Ochter was a man rich in those things which were there esteemed riches, viz. wild animals. He had, when he came to the king, six hundred rein-deer, all unbought. Among these were six of a kind which the Finni-ans value very highly, because with them they catch wild deer. He was one of the greatest men in that land, and yet he had only twenty cows, twenty sheep, and twenty swine. The little land that he ploughed, he ploughed with horses. His chief revenues consisted in the tributes which the Finni-ans or Laplanders paid him; which were composed of deer-skins, and birds feathers, and the bones of whales, and ship-ropes made of whales skins and seals skins. Every man pays according to his circumstances; the richest commonly paying fifteen martins skins, five of rein-deers, one of bears, ten bushels of feathers, one kirtle of bears skins or otters skins, two ship-ropes, each sixty yards long, the one made of whales skins, and the other of seals skins (26).’

The rest of this fragment contains a description of Norway, Denmark, and Sweden, which this adventurous navigator had visited at the desire of king Alfred; but must be omitted for the sake of brevity. The river where Ochter terminated his voyage, and from whence he returned, must have been the Dwina, on the banks of which Archangel was long after built. The Bearms, with whom Ochter conversed, were the inhabitants of the country anciently called *Bearmland*, thought by some to be the country now called *Melepadia*, *Ingermania*, &c. but more probably the country on the eastern banks of the Dwina. How many reflections will this short fragment

suggest to every intelligent reader ! and how much must he admire the genius of this great prince, who gained a more perfect knowledge of those northern seas and lands, in that early period, when the art of navigation was so imperfect, than any other Englishman acquired for more than six hundred and fifty years after his death ? For captain Richard Chancellor was the first European navigator who discovered the White sea and the river Dwina, A. D. 1553, from the age of king Alfred (27). Ochter, who performed this dangerous voyage, was probably one of those Norwegian princes who were expelled their country about A. D. 870, by that great northern conqueror Harold Harfager, who reduced all Norway under his obedience.

Wulfstan's  
voyage.

There is also extant a short journal of another voyage, written by king Alfred from the mouth of one Wulfstan, an Anglo-Saxon, whom he had sent to explore the coasts of the Baltic, and the several countries that are washed by that sea ; of which it may be proper to translate a part. ‘ Wulfstan said, that he sailed from Haethby (now Sleswic), and in five days and five nights continual sailing arrived at Truso. Weonadland was on his right hand ; on his left was Langaland, Zealand, Falster, and Sconen. All these countries belong to Denmark. Afterwards Burgendaland (perhaps Bornholm) was on the left hand, which hath a king of its own. After Burgendaland was the country which is called *Blekinga*, and Meora (perhaps Morby), and Oeland, and Gothland, on the left hand, which belong to the Sweons (Swedes) ; and Weonadland (so he calls the whole coast of Germany washed by the Baltic) was always on the right hand to the mouth of the river Wisle (the Vistula). The Wisle is a very great river, on which are Witland and Weonadland. Witland belongeth to the Esteons. The Wisle hath its source in Weonadland, and flows into the lake Estmere, which is fifteen miles broad. Then cometh the Ilfing from the east into Estmere, on the bank of which Truso standeth. Both the Ilfing and the Wisle flow into the lake Estmere, the former from the east out of Eastlandia, the latter from the west out of Weonadland. Then the Ilfing loseth its name, and



‘ falleth out of the lake into the sea, by a north-west  
 ‘ course, at a place called *Wifemouth*. The Eastland is  
 ‘ very extensive, and hath many towns, and in every  
 ‘ town a king. It abounds in honey and fish. The  
 ‘ kings and rich men drink mares milk,’ &c. The remain-  
 der of this fragment contains a very curious account of  
 the manners and customs of the people of Eastland (now  
 Poland), and in particular of the ceremonies at their  
 funerals, which are singular enough; but too long, and  
 too foreign to our present subject, to be here in-  
 serted (28).

It is impossible to discover, at this distance of time, Designs of  
Alfred un-  
known.  
 whether Alfred's views in being at so much pains to gain  
 a perfect knowledge of the seas and coasts of Scandinavia,  
 were purely commercial; or whether he had not formed  
 in his own mind the design of a military expedition into  
 those countries, to retaliate on their restless inhabitants  
 some of the injuries which they had so long inflicted on  
 the English, and the other nations of Europe, almost  
 with impunity. It would require a genius equal to Al-  
 fred's to conceive the great designs which he had formed,  
 and of which his early death prevented the execution.

This extraordinary prince did not confine his researches Alfred's  
discove-  
ries in the  
east.  
 after the knowledge of distant countries to the cold un-  
 comfortable regions of the north, though their inhabi-  
 tants made then a more conspicuous figure than they do  
 at present; but he was at equal pains to open a commu-  
 nication with the warmer climes of Asia: though our ac-  
 counts of his efforts to this purpose are quite unsatisfac-  
 tory. We know indeed that there were such efforts  
 made; but are left to guess how they were conducted.  
 He kept a correspondence with Abel patriarch of Jerusa-  
 lem, whose letters to Alfred, Afferius, his friend and  
 confidant, tells us, he had seen and read (29). From  
 this prelate he no doubt received many valuable commu-  
 nications concerning the state of several countries of the  
 east; and it was probably from him that he had intelli-  
 gence of the Christians of St. Thomas settled at Meliapore,  
 on the Coromandel coast in the Hither India, and of their  
 distressful circumstances. In whatever manner he receiv-  
 ed this information, he conceived the generous resolution

(28) See Vita Ælfredi, Append. p. 207.

(29) Affer. de Rebus gestis Ælfredi, p. 17.

of sending relief to those Christians, so far disjoined from all the rest of the Christian world; and at the same time of gaining some knowledge of those remote regions. To execute this resolution, he made choice of an Anglo-Saxon priest, named *Sighelm*; and he seems to have been very happy in his choice. ‘*Sighelm* (says the best of our ancient historians) was sent beyond sea with the king’s charity to the Christians of St. Thomas in India, and executed that commission with wonderful good fortune; which is still the subject of universal admiration. For he really penetrated into India, and returning from thence, brought with him jewels of a new kind, with which that country very much abounds. Some of these jewels may still be seen among the treasures of the church of Sherburn, of which *Sighelm* was made bishop, after his return from India (30).’ What course this adventurous priest pursued in executing this difficult commission, we are not informed; which makes it highly probable, that he embarked on board some Venetian ship for Alexandria in Egypt. For the Venetians carried on a trade with Alexandria from the very beginning of the ninth century, if not before (31). From Alexandria *Sighelm* might travel over land to some port on the western shore of the Red sea, where he might again embark, and sailing down that sea, and passing the streights of Babelmandel, he might cross the Arabian sea to the coast of Malabar; and sailing along that coast, and doubling the cape, he would soon arrive at the place of his destination. This, however, is given only as conjecture, and not as history. There can be no doubt, that *Sighelm* gave an ample relation of his travels to his royal master at his return; and if that had been preserved, it would now have been esteemed more valuable than all the jewels he brought from India.

The art  
of ship-  
building  
improved  
by Alfred.

Besides these attempts to discover unknown seas and countries, and thereby open new sources of trade, Alfred promoted commerce in several other ways. He introduced new manufactures, which furnished many things for exportation, as well as for home consumption. He repaired the sea-ports, and particularly the city of London, the favourite seat of commerce in this island, which had been ruined by the Danes (32). But the chief means

(30) W. Malmf. de Gestis Pontific. Anglor. l. 2. p. 141.

(31) Murator. Antiquitat. t. 2. p. 883.

(32) Asser. de Rebus gestis Alfredi, p. 15.

by which he promoted foreign commerce was the great improvements which he made, by his inventive genius, in the art of ship-building. The ships used by the Danes, Saxons, and all the other nations of Europe at that time, were called *keels* or *cogs*; and were of a very clumsy form, short, broad, and low; which made them very slow sailers, and very hard to work (33). Alfred, observing these defects, gave directions to his workmen for building ships of a very different construction; which are thus described in the Saxon Chronicle, the most authentic monument of those times, from which all our subsequent historians have borrowed their accounts: 'The same year (897) the Danish pirates of Northumberland, and of East-Anglia, plundered the coast of Wessex in a very grievous manner, especially towards the south. They did this in ships that had been built long before in the ancient form. Alfred, to oppose these, commanded ships to be built of a new construction. They were about twice the length of the former, and much more lofty; which made them much swifter sailers, more steady in the water, and not so apt to roll. Some of these new vessels had sixty oars, and some even more (34).<sup>a</sup> From this description, short and imperfect as it is, we may perceive that this was a great improvement in naval architecture; and that the ships of this new construction were not only more beautiful, but also more commodious, either for war or commerce, than the former. By their length and sharpness, they ploughed the sea with greater ease and celerity. By their altitude, when employed in commerce, they secured both men and goods more effectually from the waves; and when engaged in war, for which they were first invented, they were more difficult to board, and gave the combatants the great advantage of throwing their weapons from above on those below them. They appear to have been a kind of galleys, or galliots, navigated with oars as well as sails, that they might prosecute their voyage, or pursue their enemies, in a calm as well as on a wind. Of the size, capacity, and burden, of these ships, we can say nothing with certainty, but that they required sixty or seventy sailors to navi-

(33) W. Malmf. l. i. c. i.

(34) Chron. Saxon. p. 98.

gate them; which is a sufficient evidence that they were not very small (35).

The naval power and trade of England greatly increased by Alfred.

By these and the like means, this extraordinary prince raised the naval power and foreign commerce of England, from that state of annihilation in which he found them at the beginning of his reign; and before the end of it, rendered them both much greater than ever they had been in any former period of the Saxon government. That the naval power of England was greater in his time than ever it had been before, is evident from the many victories which he obtained over the Danes at sea, who till then had been considered as invincible on that element. That the foreign commerce of England was also greater, is no less evident from the superior splendour of his court, and the greater quantities of cash, and of foreign commodities, that were then in England; some of them the produce of very distant countries, which could only be procured by commerce (36). We have already heard of the precious stones brought from India; and Aſterius tells us, that one morning, after Alfred had made him a grant of two abbeys, with all their furniture, he gave him a present of a very fine silk cloak, and of as much frankincense as a strong man could carry, accompanied with this obliging expression,—‘That these were but trifles in comparison of what he designed to give him (37).’ This is a sufficient proof that Alfred was possessed of considerable quantities of the most precious productions of the East, the happy effects of a flourishing trade.

The trade of England hurt by the death of Alfred.

As England had gained more by the life, so it suffered more by the death of Alfred, than by that of any other prince that had ever filled the throne; because many great designs which he had formed for advancing the prosperity of his kingdom, and the felicity of his subjects, perished with him. If this prince performed so much in the midst of the tumults of war, what would he not have accomplished if his life had been prolonged, after he had triumphed over all his enemies, and brought his kingdom into a state of perfect order and tranquillity? It was, however, so far happy, that some degree of the

(35) See Spelman's *Life of Alfred*, p. 50, 51. Dr. Campbell's *Lives of the Admirals*, vol. i. p. 55.

(36) Clarke on *Coins*, p. 290. n.

(37) Aſter. de *Rebus gestis Alfredi*, p. 15.



genius of Alfred descended to his son Edward, and his grandson Athelstan, who were educated under his eye, to say nothing of his daughter Ethelreda countess of Mercia, who inherited a still greater portion of her father's spirit.

Edward the Elder, who mounted the throne in the first year of the tenth century, influenced by the precepts and example of his illustrious father, gave proper attention to the naval power and commerce of his kingdom. For though he was chiefly engaged, during his whole reign, in reducing the turbulent Danes of East-Anglia and Northumberland to a more perfect subjection, and in fortifying many towns and castles for the internal security of the country, he constantly kept up a fleet of a hundred ships, with which he protected the trade of his subjects, and maintained the dominion of the sea (38).

History of  
trade in  
the reign  
of Edward  
the Elder

Athelstan, the eldest son and successor of Edward, was at much greater pains to increase the naval power and commerce of England than his father had been. This wise prince, sensible of the great advantages of foreign trade, encouraged his subjects to engage in it, by making it the road to honour as well as wealth. For by one of his laws it was enacted, — 'If a mariner or merchant  
' so prosper as to make three voyages over the high  
' seas, with a ship and cargo of his own, he shall be  
' advanced to the honour and dignity of a thane (39).' This excellent law, which discovers an equal knowledge of human nature and of the true interest of England, must have been productive of very great effects, though the particulars are not preserved in the scanty annals of those times. Athelstan, still further to facilitate and encourage commerce, established a mint, or mints, in every town in England that had any considerable foreign trade, that the merchants might have an opportunity of converting the bullion that they brought home for their goods into current coin, without much expence or trouble. These towns were, London, Canterbury, Winchester, Rochester, Exeter, Lewis, Hastings, Chichester, Southampton, Werham, and Shaftesbury (40). These and other wise regulations excited such a spirit for trade,

Trade  
promoted  
by King  
Athelstan.

(38) Chron. Saxon. p. 102.

(39) Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 71.

(40) Id. p. 55.

and so much increased the shipping and seamen of England, that Athelstan maintained the dominion of the sea, and obliged the Danish and Norwegian princes to court his friendship. ‘ All Europe (says William of Malmſbury) proclaimed his praises and extolled his virtues to the skies. Happy did those foreign princes think themselves, and not without reason, who could gain his friendship, either by presents or alliances. Harold king of Norway sent him a fine ship, with a gilded stern and purple sails, surrounded and defended on all sides with a row of gilded shields (41).’ Nothing but a flourishing foreign trade, and a powerful navy, could have made a king of England to be so much respected and courted by the princes on the continent; especially in those times, when there were hardly any political connections between distant nations.

History of  
trade and  
shipping in  
the reign  
of Edgar  
the Peace-  
able.

Though nothing seems to have been done in the short reigns of Edmund, Edred, and Edwi, from A. D. 941 to A. D. 957, for the encouragement of commerce; yet the spirit that had been awakened continued to operate, and the naval power and trade of England to increase. This enabled Edgar the Peaceable, who succeeded his unfortunate brother Edwi, to raise a greater fleet, and make a more distinguished figure at sea, than any of his predecessors. This prince, however, was so great a favourite of the monks, the only historians of those times, that every thing they say of him must be understood with caution; and, in particular, their accounts of the number of his ships are perfectly incredible, some making them 3000, some 3600, and some no fewer than 4000 (42). These numbers are so extravagant, that it seems most probable, that the transcribers have added a cipher, and thereby made them ten times the real number. Is it possible to imagine, that a king of England, in the infancy of foreign trade, had three hundred thousand seamen in his service? and yet so many it would require to man a fleet of three thousand ships, allowing only one hundred men to each ship, which is certainly a very moderate computation. The above conjecture concerning the transcribers is the more probable, that one of our ancient

(41) W. Malmſ. l. 2. c. 6.

(42) Hoveden. p. 426. Flor. Wigorn. p. 607. Abbas Rieval. p. 360. Brompt.

historians makes the number of king Edgar's ships only three hundred (43). Even this was a great number, and shews the rapid increase of the English navy, from one hundred (the complement of it in the reign of Edward the Elder) to three hundred, in the short space of fifty years. This fleet king Edgar divided into three equal squadrons, one of which he stationed on the east coast, another on the south, and the third on the north, for the protection of these coasts, and maintaining the dominion of the sea. What our historians further add concerning his sailing round the whole island of Britain every summer in these fleets, and visiting in person every creek and harbour, can hardly be strictly true (44). All that we can depend upon in this matter is, that by the gradual increase of trade, seamen, and shipping, Edgar had a greater fleet than any of his predecessors; which he kept in excellent order, and with which he effectually protected the coasts of his kingdom and the commerce of his subjects. This is all an English monarch ought to wish; and short of this he ought not to stop. Besides the protection and encouragement that Edgar the Peaceable gave to foreign trade, he made several laws for regulating the internal commerce of his subjects. By one of these laws it was enacted, 'That all the money coined in the kingdom should be of one kind; and that no man should refuse it in payments; and that the measures used at Winchester should be used over all the kingdom (45):' A wise regulation, which probably never took effect. By another law it was appointed, that thirty-three honest men should be chosen in large towns, and twelve in small towns, to be witnesses to all bargains within these towns; and that no man should either buy or sell any thing but before two or three of these sworn witnesses. When any member of a decennary or tithing went to a distant market, he was required, by another law, to acquaint the tithingman or burgholder what he designed to buy or sell, and also to acquaint him at his return what he had bought or sold (46). All these, and several other troublesome restrictions of the same kind, designed to prevent frauds, and the sale of stolen goods, sufficiently shew, that commercial transactions were but

(43) W. Thorn.

(44) W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 7.

(45) Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 78.

(46) Id. p. 80, 81.

few in comparison of what they are at present; and that little mutual confidence reigned among the members of society.

History of  
trade and  
shipping in  
the reign  
of Ethel-  
red the  
Unready.

The minorities of the two sons of Edgar the Peaceable, and the weakness of Ethelred, the youngest of them, after he arrived at man's estate, were very fatal to the naval power, commerce, and prosperity of England; for those who had the direction of affairs under these princes, observing the profound peace and security that the kingdom enjoyed, occasioned by the vigour of the late government, imagined that a navy was become unnecessary, and suffered their ships to rot in their harbours. It was not long before their ancient enemies the Danes received intelligence, and took advantage of this fatal error. At first, indeed, those destructive rovers approached the coasts of England with a kind of dread and diffidence, as afraid to rouse a sleeping lion; but finding the defenceless state of these coasts, they boldly poured upon them on all sides, and spread desolation and misery from one end of the kingdom to the other. It is as unnecessary as it would be unpleasant, to give a minute detail of all the defeats, disgraces, and miseries, which the English suffered in the long unhappy reign of Ethelred the Unready; which were chiefly owing to their neglect of maritime affairs, and the want of a sufficient fleet to protect their trade and coasts, and maintain the dominion of the surrounding seas (47). After having often tried the shameful expedient of bribing their enemies, by great sums of money, to desist from their depredations; and finding that this, like throwing oil into a fire, instead of diminishing, increased their violence; they became sensible of their error in neglecting their fleet, the only impenetrable bulwark of their country. To correct this error, a law was made A. D. 1008, obliging the proprietors of every 310 hides of land to furnish a ship for the royal navy (48). In consequence of this law, a very great fleet was raised of near eight hundred ships; which, says the Saxon Chronicle, was greater than any that had ever been seen in England in the reign of any former king (49). This is a sufficient proof, that the merchants and mariners of England, in the midst of all the miseries of their country,

(47) Chron. Saxon. p. 125—146. (48) Id. p. 136. (49) Id. *Ibid.*



had not abandoned the sea, or neglected foreign trade; for so great a fleet could not have been raised by any but a commercial people. Of this there are some other evidences. In this reign, several wise and humane laws were made for the security of the persons, ships, and effects of merchants, when they were driven into an English harbour by stress of weather, or were wrecked upon the coast; which shew, that it was the intention of the legislators to encourage foreign trade (50). By other laws made in a great council, or wittenagemot, held at Wantage, the rates of the customs to be paid on the importation of various kinds of goods at the wharf of Billingsgate, in the port of London, were settled (51). From these laws it also appears, that there was a society or company of German merchants, called *the emperor's men*, then residing in London, who were obliged to pay to the king for his protection, twice a-year (at Christmas and Easter), two pieces of gray cloth, and one piece of brown cloth, ten pounds of pepper, five pair of gloves, and two casks of wine (52). This company was probably the same with that which was afterwards so well known by the name of the *Merchants of the Steelyard*. There is still extant a kind of commercial treaty between king Ethelred and the princes of Wales, by which a court was constituted, consisting of six English law-men and six Welsh law-men (as they are called), who were to determine all disputes that should arise between the people of England and Wales (53).

Though the total subjection of the English to the Danes, A. D. 1017, was fatal to some noble families, and involved the Anglo-Saxon princes in great distress, it was, in some respects, salutary to the kingdom, and particularly to its commerce, by putting an end to those bloody wars between the two nations, which had raged about forty years with little intermission. Canute the Great, being a wise as well as a warlike prince, endeavoured to gain the affections of his English subjects, by affording them the most effectual protection, and every encouragement in his power (54). He sent home to Denmark, as soon as he could do it with safety, the

History of  
trade in  
the reign  
of Canute  
the Great,  
&c.

(50) Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 104.

(51) Brompton, p. 887. Anderson's Hist. Commerce, vol. 1. p. 52.

(52) Id. ibid.

(53) Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 125.

(54) W. Malm. l. 2. c. 11.

greatest part of his Danish troops, that they might no longer be either a burden or terror to the English. He also dismissed all his fleet, except forty ships, which he retained for some time to protect the trade and coasts of England (55). He employed that influence which his high reputation, his extensive dominions, and his mighty power, gave him with foreign princes, in procuring favours and privileges from them for his trading subjects. When he was at Rome A. D. 1031, he negotiated a commercial treaty in person with the emperor Conrad II. and Rodolph III. the last king of Arles; in which he obtained very extraordinary exemptions for the English merchants in the dominions of these princes. This we learn from his own letter which he sent from Rome to the nobility of England. ‘I spoke with the emperor, the pope, and all the princes whom I found here, about the grievances of my subjects, English as well as Danes; and insisted, that they should be more favourably treated in time to come, and not so much vexed with tolls and exactions of various kinds in their dominions. The emperor, king Rodolph, and the other princes, complied with my remonstrances, and consented, that all my subjects, merchants, as well as those who travelled on a religious account, should meet with no interruption, but should be protected without paying any toll (56).’ Under the auspices of this powerful prince, the trade of England flourished greatly, and the English merchants, especially those of London, acquired a degree of weight and influence in the public councils of the kingdom, formerly unknown. This appeared in a strong light, from the important part they acted in the very beginning of the next reign, as we learn from the best authority. ‘As soon as Canute was dead, a great assembly of the nobility met at Oxford, where were present earl Leofric, almost all the thanes to the north of the Thames, and the seamen of London, who chose Harold to be king of all England (57).’ These seamen of London, who were members of this wittenagemot, or great council, were probably such merchants of that city as had made three voyages beyond seas in ships of their own, and had thereby acquired a legal title to the dignity of thanes. The

(55) Chron. Saxon, p. 151.

(56) W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 11.

(57) Chron. Saxon. p. 154.

tranquillity that England enjoyed after the accession of the Danish princes was so great, that the royal navy was reduced by Canute to sixteen ships; for the support of which an equitable and moderate tax was imposed, and on this footing it continued during all the remainder of his reign, and the whole reign of his successor Harold. Each mariner on board this fleet was allowed eight mancusses, and each commander twelve mancusses, a-year, for pay and provisions; which was a very liberal allowance in those times (58). Hardicanute, the last of the Danish kings of England, kept a fleet of sixty ships, and gave his seamen the same generous allowance; which rendered the tax imposed for their support so heavy, that it became the occasion of much discontent and of some tumults (59). The restoration of the Saxon line to the crown of England, in the person of Edward the Confessor, made no material change in the naval power or commerce of the kingdom; which were both in a flourishing state at the conclusion of this period.

It is quite impossible, at this distance of time, to discover the numbers or the tonnage of the ships belonging to England at the Norman conquest; but there is sufficient evidence that they were both considerable. To lay no stress on the exaggerated accounts of the prodigious fleets of Edgar the Peaceable, that of king Ethelred, which was raised after the English had suffered many losses both by sea and land, consisted of near eight hundred ships; besides which, there were, no doubt, many employed in trade at the same time. After this, the shipping of England continued to increase to the very conclusion of this period, when it is not improbable they might amount to two or three thousand vessels, from twenty to one hundred tons. From the representation of many of these ships in the famous tapestry of Bayeux, it appears, that they were a kind of galleys with one mast, on which was spread one very large sail, by means of a yard raised to near the top of it with pulleys. Their shape was not inelegant, their stems adorned with the heads of men, lions, or other animals, which (if we may believe historians) were sometimes gilded (60).

State of  
the ship-  
ping of  
England  
at the end  
of this pe-  
riod.

(58) Chron. Saxon. p. 155. Flor. Wigorn. p. 623.

(59) W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 12.

(60) Montfaucon Monumens Françoises, t. 1. p. 376. Mémoires de l'Académie Royale, l. 12.

Though the following description of the ships of that great fleet, with which king Canute invaded England, is evidently too poetical to be strictly true, yet as it was composed by a cotemporary writer, who was probably an eye-witness of what he describes, it merits some attention: ‘So great was the splendour and beauty of the ships of his mighty fleet, that they dazzled the eyes, and struck terror into the hearts of the beholders: for the rays of the sun reflected from the bright shields and polished arms of the soldiers, and the sides of the ships gilded with gold and silver, exhibited a spectacle equally terrible and magnificent. On the top of the mast of every ship was the gilded figure of some bird, which, turning on a spindle with the winds, discovered from whence they blew. The stems of the ships were adorned with various figures cast in metal, and gilded with gold and silver. On one you might behold the statue of a man, with a countenance as fierce and menacing as if he had been alive; on another a most terrible golden lion; on a third a dragon of burnished brass; and on a fourth a furious bull with gilded horns, in act to rush on the terrified spectators. In a word, the appearance of this fleet was at once so grand and formidable, that it filled all who saw it with dread and admiration of the prince to whom it belonged; and his enemies were more than half vanquished by their eyes, before they came to blows (61).’ If we could depend on the truth of this description, we should be inclined to think, that the Danes and Saxons had made much greater progress in several arts than is commonly imagined.

English  
exports in  
this pe-  
riod.

Though the merchant-ships in this period were very small and trifling in comparison of those at present used in foreign trade, they were sufficient to export and import considerable quantities of goods. But of those exports and imports we are not able to add much to the account contained in the first volume of this work, to which we refer the reader (62).

Slaves.

Slaves still continued to form one of the most valuable articles of exportation from England in this period; and great numbers of unhappy men, women, and children, were carried out of this island, and, like cattle, exposed

(61) *Encomium Emmæ*, apud Duchesne, p. 166.

(62) Vol. I. c. 6.



to sale in all the markets of Europe. It was the sight of a number of English slaves exposed in this manner in the market at Rome, that inspired Gregory the Great with the resolution of attempting the conversion of their countrymen to Christianity. ‘As Gregory was one day passing through the market-place, soon after a company of foreign merchants had arrived, and set out the various kinds of goods which they had brought to sell, he observed a number of young men, of fair complexions, fine hair, and beautiful faces, exposed to sale. Being struck with their appearance, he enquired from what country they came; and was told, that they came from the isle of Britain, and the kingdom of Deira. He then asked, whether the inhabitants of that country were Christians or Pagans? and being answered that they were Pagans, he broke out into this exclamation,—Wo is me, that men, so amiable in their external appearance, should be destitute of the grace of God in their souls! and immediately applied to the pope (for it was before he was pope himself), and earnestly intreated him to send missionaries into England, to attempt the conversion of that country to Christianity (63).’ The mildest fate that those unhappy persons could expect, who were taken prisoners in the long wars between the Saxons and Britons, between the several kingdoms of the heptarchy, and between the English and Danes, was to be sold as slaves; which furnished a constant and plentiful supply to those merchants who were engaged in this disgraceful traffic. Many of these slave-merchants were Jews, who found a good market for their Christian slaves among the Saracens in Spain and Africa (64). This occasioned several laws and canons of the church to be made in England, and other countries, against selling Christian slaves to Jews or Pagans (65).

The exportation of slaves from some parts of England continued to the very end of this period. ‘Some young men (says William of Malmesbury) were exported from Northumberland to be sold, according to a custom which seems to be natural to the people of that country, of selling their nearest relations for their own ad-

Examples  
of the  
slave-  
trade.

(63) Bed. Hist. Eccles. l. 2. c. 1.

(64) Murator. Antiq. t. 2. p. 883.

(65) Johnston's Canons, A. D. 740.

‘ vantage: a custom which we see them practise even in  
 ‘ our own days (66).’ The people of Bristol seem to  
 have been no less addicted to this ignominious branch of  
 trade; of which we have the following curious account  
 in the life of Wulfstan, who was bishop of Worcester  
 at the Norman conquest. ‘ There is a sea-port town  
 ‘ called *Bristol*, opposite to Ireland, into which its inha-  
 ‘ bitants make frequent voyages on account of trade.  
 ‘ Wulfstan cured the people of this town of a most  
 ‘ odious and inveterate custom, which they derived from  
 ‘ their ancestors, of buying men and women in all parts  
 ‘ of England, and exporting them to Ireland for the  
 ‘ sake of gain. The young women they commonly got  
 ‘ with child, and carried them to market in their preg-  
 ‘ nancy, that they might bring a better price. You  
 ‘ might have seen, with sorrow, long ranks of young  
 ‘ persons of both sexes, and of the greatest beauty, tied  
 ‘ together with ropes, and daily exposed to sale: nor  
 ‘ were these men ashamed, O horrid wickedness! to  
 ‘ give up their nearest relations, nay their own children,  
 ‘ to slavery. Wulfstan, knowing the obstinacy of these  
 ‘ people, sometimes stayed two months amongst them,  
 ‘ preaching every Lord’s day; by which, in process of  
 ‘ time, he made so great an impression upon their minds,  
 ‘ that they abandoned that wicked trade, and set an ex-  
 ‘ ample to all the rest of England to do the same (67).’

Horses,  
 &c.

English horses, which were universally admired, made  
 another valuable article of the exports of this period;  
 but the following law of king Athelstan’s probably gave  
 some check to that branch of trade: ‘ No man shall ex-  
 ‘ port any horses beyond seas, except such as he designs  
 ‘ to give in presents (68).’ We have no direct evidence  
 that corn was exported from England in this period, as it  
 had been from provincial Britain in the Roman times;  
 and when we reflect on the imperfect state of agriculture  
 among the Anglo-Saxons, we shall be inclined to think,  
 that it was not, or at least not with any constancy, or in  
 any considerable quantities.

Imports.

Our information concerning the different kinds of  
 goods imported into England in this period (besides those  
 mentioned in the first volume of this work), is also very

(66) W. Malmf. l. 1. c. 3.

(67) Anglia Sacra, t. 2. p. 258.

(68) Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 52.

imperfect. Books, especially on religious subjects, and for the use of churches, made no inconsiderable article of importation, as they bore a very high price, were much wanted, and much desired (69). The relics, pictures, and images of saints, which were objects of great veneration in those dark ages, were imported in great quantities, and at a great expence; as also vestments for the clergy, veils, altar-cloths, silver vessels for the celebration of the sacraments, and, in a word, all the different utensils and ornaments of churches. This sacred traffic was chiefly managed by priests, who were believed to be the best judges of those commodities, some of which had little or no intrinsic value. The famous Benedict Biscop, founder of the monastery of Weremouth, made several voyages in this trade, and brought home valuable cargoes of books, relics, pictures, statues, vessels, vestments, &c. which he had purchased in France and Italy. He furnished and adorned his own monastery with some of these goods, and sold the rest to very great advantage (70). It was the constant practice of the founders of churches and monasteries, and of all other English prelates who visited foreign countries, to collect and import those kinds of merchandize for the use of their own and other churches; and he who brought home the greatest quantity of relics, made the most profitable voyage, and was esteemed the greatest saint. When the city of Venice first, and afterwards the cities of Pisa and Amalphi, became the repositories of the precious productions and manufactures of the East, these cities were visited by English merchants, who imported from thence precious stones, gold, silver, silk, linen, spiceries, drugs, and other kinds of goods (71). It was to these cities of Italy that those voyages were made which raised the persons who made them to the dignity of thanes. Wines were imported from Spain and France, cloths from Germany and Flanders, and furs, deer-skins, whale-oil, ropes, &c. &c. from Scandinavia (72). It is unnecessary to make this enumeration more complete, as it sufficiently appears already, ‘ that the foreign trade of England ‘ was so extensive, even in this remote period, as to

(69) W. Malmf. *de Pontificibus*, l. 5.

(70) Bedæ *Hist. Abbat. Weremuth.* passim.

(71) Murator. *Antiq.* t. 2. p. 883.

(72) Anderson's *Hist. Comm.* vol. 1. p. 52. *Vita Ælfredi*, Append. 6.

‘ furnish such of her inhabitants as could afford to pay  
 ‘ for them, with a share of all the commodities that  
 ‘ were then known in any part of Europe.’

Balance of  
 trade in  
 favour of  
 England.

As we have no means of discovering the quantities of the goods exported and imported in this period, it is quite impossible to find out how the balance of trade stood between England and any foreign country. We have good reason, however, to believe, that upon the whole the balance was in favour of England; and that her foreign trade was really profitable, by bringing home cash or bullion, for the increase of the national treasures, as well as goods for consumption. If this had not been the case, it would have been impossible for England, without mines of gold or silver, to have supplied the great losses of cash which she sustained,—by the depredations and exactions of the Danes,—by the tax of Peter-pence paid annually to Rome,—and by the many expensive journies of her princes, prelates, and nobles, into foreign countries. These continual drains, for which no returns were made, must have carried off all the money in the kingdom long before the end of this period, if fresh supplies had not been brought home by trade. But there is a still stronger proof of this, arising from the considerable quantities of foreign coins, particularly gold coins, that were current in England in this period; which were no doubt brought home by the merchants as the balance of trade in favour of this country. These coins were so plentiful, that almost all great payments for estates, donations to churches, and valuable legacies, were made in them (73). The considerable quantities of gold and silver that were made into plate, jewels, and trinkets of various kinds, afford a further evidence of the truth of what is above advanced (74). Besides, it is believed, that the quantity of money in England of our own coining gradually increased in the course of this period; which is one of the best evidences of a profitable foreign trade.

History of  
 coin or  
 money.

To prevent that confusion which is apt to arise from blending several subjects together, little hath yet been said of coin or money, the great instrument of commerce, and one of the happiest of human inventions.

Living  
 money.

Before we proceed to give the history of money made of gold, silver, or other metals, it may be proper to

1 (73) See Clarke on Coins, p. 273. (74) Id. p. 275, 276.



take some notice of a singular kind of money, which is often mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon monuments of this period, by the name of *living money* (75). This consisted of slaves, and cattle of all kinds, which had a certain value set upon them by law, at which they passed current in the payment of debts and the purchase of commodities of all kinds, and supplied the deficiency of money properly so called. Thus, for example, when one person owed another a certain sum of money, which he had not a sufficient quantity of coin to pay, he supplied that deficiency by giving a certain number of slaves, horses, cows, or sheep, at the rate set upon them by law when they passed for money, to make up the sum (76). It was also very common in those times, when one man purchased an estate from another, to purchase all the living money upon it at the same time; i. e. to take all the slaves, horses, and other animals upon it, at the rate stamped upon them by law when they were considered as money (77). All kinds of mulcts imposed by the state, or penances by the church, might have been paid either in dead or living money, as was most convenient; with this single exception, that the church, designing to discourage slavery, refused to accept of slaves as money in the payment of penances (78). In those parts of Britain where coins were very scarce, almost all debts were paid, and purchases made, with living money. This was so much the case, both in Scotland and Wales, that it hath been very much doubted, whether there were any coins struck in either of those countries in this period (79). This much at least is certain, that no coins of any of the Scotch or Welsh princes who flourished in this period have been found: a sufficient proof, that if there ever were any such coins, they were very scarce. To supply this defect, an exact value was set upon all animals by law, according to which they were to be received in all payments, and by which they became living money (80). This seems to have been a kind of intermediate step between mere barter, and the universal use of coin.

(75) Hist. Elieus. apud Gale, l. 1. c. 10.

(76) Id. ibid. c. 25.

(77) Id. ibid. c. 11.

(78) Johnson's Canons, A. D. 877. Can. 7.

(79) Anderfoni Diplomata Scotiæ, præfat. p. 57. Camden's Remains, p. 181.

(80) Vide Leges Wallicæ, l. 3. c. 5. p. 230—257.

History of  
coin.

It is now time to enter upon a short deduction of the state of coin in Great Britain, its weights, denominations, and other circumstances, from the beginning to the end of this period: an intricate perplexing subject, in which, after all the labours of many learned and ingenious men, some things are dark and doubtful, and on which it is no shame to fail of giving entire satisfaction.

State of  
coin from  
the de-  
parture of  
the Ro-  
mans to  
the esta-  
blishment  
of the Sax-  
ons.

It hath been already proved, that provincial Britain was very rich in money in the flourishing times of the Roman government, and that much of it was carried away by the Romans at their departure (81). But though this was true, it is probable, or rather certain, that considerable sums of Roman money were left behind, in the hands of the provincial Britons, and of those Romans who chose to remain in Britain, rather than abandon their houses and estates. This made provincial Britain, after all the losses it had sustained by the departure of the Romans, and the depredations of the Scots and Picts, a valuable prize, on account of its cash, as well as of the verdure of its plains; and the former had probably as great charms in the eyes of the Saxons as the latter. For those adventurers, at their arrival in this island, were far from being ignorant of the use, or indifferent about the possession of money: on the contrary, the acquisition of it had been one of the chief objects of those piratical expeditions to which they had been long accustomed (82). As soon as they began to quarrel with the Britons, they seized their cash, as well as their lands and goods, converted it to their own use, and employed it in commerce. The current coin of England, therefore, in the former part of this period, was partly Roman money, which the several armies of Saxon adventurers had taken from the unhappy Britons, and partly German money, which they had brought with them from the continent. For as those armies came into this island with a design to settle in it, and brought their wives and children with them, we may be certain that they did not leave their cash behind them.

The first  
Saxon  
coins.

It is impossible to discover when the princes of the several Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of the heptarchy began to coin money of their own; though it is highly proba-

(81) See vol. 1.

(82) Bartholen. de Causis Contemp. apud Danos Mortis, p. 449.

ble they exercised this prerogative of royalty soon after they assumed the name of kings. In the most ancient of their laws, which are those of Ethelbright, who was king of Kent from A. D. 561 to A. D. 616, all the mulcts are estimated in shillings, which were Saxon coins or denominations of money (83): A proof that this money was become the current coin of the kingdom before that period. It is true indeed, that the oldest Anglo-Saxon coin yet discovered (except one of Ethelbright's, which Camden says he had seen) is one of Edwin's, who was king of Northumberland from A. D. 617 to A. D. 633; and it is even far from being certain that this coin belonged to Edwin. But this is no evidence, that there were not many pieces coined by the more ancient kings of that and of the other kingdoms (84).

When the precious metals of gold and silver were first employed as the great instruments of commerce, and the representatives of all commodities, they were paid by weight, without any impression; and even after pieces of these metals began to be stamped or coined, these pieces were still certain well-known weights of the country where they were coined; the smaller coins being commonly regular subdivisions of the greater, as halves, fourths, &c. But as it would have been inconvenient, on many accounts, to have stamped very large pieces of gold and silver, or, in other words, to have made very large unportable coins, it became usual to make a certain fixed number of coins out of a certain weight of metal, as a pound, an ounce, &c. and then to call that number of coins by the name of that weight. This introduced the distinction between real coins, as crowns, half-crowns, shillings, &c. and denominations of money, as pounds, marks, nobles, &c. each of the latter containing a certain fixed and well-known number of the former. Monies of both these kinds are frequently mentioned in the laws and histories of the Anglo-Saxons; and therefore the most methodical and satisfactory way of treating this intricate subject seems to be this,—first to set down all the different kinds of money, whether real coins or mere denominations, that were known and used in England in this period, beginning with the highest,

Distinction  
between  
real and  
nominal  
money.

(83) *Leges Saxon.* p. 2, &c.

(84) *Hicceſii Diſſertat. Epist.* p. 181. *Camd. Remains*, p. 181.  
and

and ending with the lowest ;---and then to give some account of each of these kinds of money, in the same order.

Names of Anglo-Saxon money. *The different kinds of money that are mentioned in the laws and histories of England in this period.*

- |                  |                                 |
|------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. The pound,    | 7. The sceata,                  |
| 2. The mark,     | 8. The penny,                   |
| 3. The mancus,   | 9. The halfling, or half-penny, |
| 4. The ora,      | 10. The feorthling,             |
| 5. The shilling, | 11. The stica.                  |
| 6. The thrimfa,  |                                 |

The pound.

The pound of money is very often mentioned in the laws of the Anglo-Saxons, as well as in many passages of their history. Thus, by these laws, the king's weregeld was two hundred and thirty pounds of silver, one half to be paid to the public for the loss of its sovereign, and the other half to the royal family for the loss of its head (85). It is almost unnecessary to take notice, that the Anglo-Saxon pound was not a real coin: for coins of such weight would at any time be inconvenient; but when the precious metals were so scarce and valuable, would have been peculiarly improper. The pound was then, as it is at present, only a denomination of money; but with this remarkable difference, that it was then a just and real denomination, and implied what the word imports; whereas at present it is an arbitrary name given to a sum of money that weighs only about one third of a pound. Whenever, therefore, we meet with the pound in the laws and history of the Anglo-Saxons, it signifies as many of their coins of any kind as were actually made out of a pound of metal, and, if thrown into the scale, would have weighed a pound. Their nummular language in this particular was perfectly agreeable to truth, and conveyed the clearest ideas to their minds; because they could not but know the weight of their own pound, and how many pieces of each kind of coin were made out of it. But we who live at so great a distance of time, and have such imperfect monuments of those ages, are not so well acquainted with those two particulars; which hath been the occasion of almost all the darkness and uncertainty in



which this subject is involved. It will be proper, therefore, before we proceed one step further, to endeavour to discover, if possible, the real weight of the money-pound of the Anglo-Saxons.

Weights and measures are among the first things that are adjusted by the people of all countries, after their emerging from the savage state, and beginning to have any commercial intercourse among themselves, or with the rest of mankind : for till these are settled and understood, neither foreign nor domestic trade can be carried on with any tolerable degree of justice or exactness. We may be very certain, therefore, that the Anglo-Saxons, at their arrival in this island, had their own weights and measures handed down to them from their ancestors, and firmly established by immemorial custom. We may be no less certain, that they brought these their ancient national weights and measures with them, and that they and their posterity continued to use them in their new settlements in this island, as they and their ancestors had done in their old ones on the continent ; for there is hardly any one thing of which nations are more tenacious than of their weights and measures. There is no probability, therefore, in the conjecture of some learned men,—that the Anglo-Saxons adopted the Roman weights and measures which they found in use among the provincial Britons, and laid their own aside (86). This was a compliment they were by no means disposed to pay, to a nation with whom they had no friendly intercourse, and against whom they were animated with the most implacable hatred. Nor is this conjecture more agreeable to historical evidence than to probability. The late learned Mr. Folkes discovered, that the Tower-pound, which continued so long in use in the English mints, was the money-pound of the Anglo-Saxons. ‘ It is reasonable (says he) to think, that William the Conqueror introduced no new weight into his mints, but that the same weight used there for some ages, and called the pound of the Tower, was the old pound of the Saxon moneyers before the conquest. This pound was lighter than the Troy pound by three quarters of an ounce Troy (87).’ This estimate of the Tower or

Weight of  
the Saxon  
money-  
pound.

(86) Gronov. de Pecun. Vet. p. 347. Hooper of Ancient Weights and Measures. p. 420.

(87) Tables of English Silver Coins, p. 1, 2.

Saxon money-pound, is supported by the unquestionable evidence of a verdict remaining in the exchequer, dated October 30, A. D. 1527: 'And whereas heretofore the merchaunte paid for coinage of every pound Towre of fyne gold, weighing xi oz. quarter Troye, 11s. vi d. Now it is determined by the king's highness, and his said councille, that the foresaid pound Towre shall be no more used and occupied; but all manner of gold and silver shall be wayed by the pound Troye, which maketh xii oz. Troye, which exceedeth the pound Towre in weight 111 quarters of the oz (88).' The old Tower or Saxon ounce, the twelfth part of the Tower or Saxon pound, as taken from the accounts in the exchequer A. D. 1527, was 450 Troy grains (89). From the above account, it appears, that the Anglo-Saxon money-pound, with its subdivisions of grains and ounces stood thus:

Troy grains.

450	ounce.	
5400	12	pound.

Mr. Folkes gives another estimate of the Saxon or Tower pound, taken from the chamber of accounts at Paris about Edward III.'s time, which is a very little different from that given above, making the Tower ounce 451.76 Troy grains (90). But this difference is so trifling, being hardly thirteen grains in the pound, that it merits no attention.

There is one circumstance that makes it highly probable, if not absolutely certain, that the Anglo-Saxons brought this money-pound with them from the continent; which is this,—that it is the same with the German money-pound, to a degree of exactness that could not be owing to accident, but proves that they were derived from one origin, viz. the pound of their common ancestors the ancient Germans. The great resemblance, or rather identity, of these pounds, will appear from the following table:

	Troy grains.
The Old Tower or Saxon ounce,       -       -       -	450
The present Colonia ounce,       -       -       -	451.38

(88) Tables of English Silver Coins, p. 1, 2.

(89) Clarke on Coins, p. 24.

(90) Id. *ibid.*

	<i>Troy grains.</i>
The standard Strasburgh ounce,	- - 451.38
The Tower or Saxon ounce in Edward III.'s time,	- - 451.76

The learned Mr. Clarke (to whose curious researches I gratefully acknowledge I am much indebted) traces the origin of the Saxon money-pound much higher, and deduces it from the ancient Greek pound. But the shortest abridgment that could be given of that deduction, would be too long for this place (91). It is sufficient to observe upon the whole, that if the above account be just, 'the money-pound of the Anglo-Saxons was the denomination or name of as many coins of any kind as were coined out of a mass of metal weighing 5400 Troy grains.' The names and numbers of these coins will afterwards appear; but it may not be improper to take notice at present, that out of every such pound of silver were coined 240 silver pennies, each weighing  $22\frac{1}{2}$  Troy grains, twenty pennies out of every ounce. If the Saxons had such a coin as a shilling (which it is highly probable they had), forty-eight of these shillings were coined out of every pound of silver, four out of every ounce; each shilling containing five pennies, and weighing  $112\frac{1}{2}$  Troy grains.

It must not be concealed, that some eminent writers on this subject have been of opinion, that the Anglo-Saxons had another money-pound of fifteen ounces (92). This opinion is chiefly founded on the following law of king Athelstan, who reigned in the former part of the tenth century: 'A ceorl's weregeld, by the Mercian law, is two hundred shillings; a thane's weregeld is six times as much, or twelve hundred shillings; the simple weregeld of a king is equal to that of six thanes, or thirty thousand sceatas, which make one hundred and twenty pounds. The kingbote, which is to be paid to the kingdom, is equal to the weregeld, which is to be paid to the royal family (93).' From this law it appears, that at this time six times 1200 shillings, or 7200 shillings, were equal to 120 pounds; which they could not be, unless there were 60 shillings

(91) See Clarke on Coins, p. 26.

(92) Hicessii Dissertat, Epistol. p. 111. Sir Andrew Fountaine, ibid. p. 165.

(93) Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 64.

in the pound. Now if there had been only four of these shillings coined out of an ounce, it is certain that the pound, out of which sixty of them were coined, must have contained 15 ounces. But the most probable account of this matter seems to be this: that about this time the weight and value of the shilling was diminished one fifth part; and instead of containing five pennies, and weighing  $112\frac{1}{2}$  grains, it contained only four pennies, and weighed only 90 grains. This diminution of the shilling might be owing to a scarcity of silver, occasioned by the depredations of the Danes, and exigencies of the state, or to some other cause to us unknown. If this supposition be admitted, the monstrous absurdity of having two money-pounds, with their numerous subdivisions, current in the same country at the same time (which would have introduced intolerable confusion and perplexity into all money-transactions), will be avoided: the pound will remain the same, consisting of 12 ounces, out of which were coined, for a time, sixty shillings, each containing only four pennies, and weighing only 90 grains. This supposition is almost converted into a certainty, when we consider, that all writers on this subject allow, that there never were either more or fewer than 240 pennies in the pound; and that this proportion between the pound and the penny was always observed in all the gradual diminutions of the pound, and is observed at this day: but if the shilling contained five pennies, when there were sixty of them in the pound, as it certainly did when there were only forty-eight of them in the pound; in the former case, the pound of sixty shillings must have contained 300 pennies, which it certainly never did. At what time this diminution of the weight and value of the shilling took place, and how long it continued, it is impossible to discover with precision; but there is sufficient evidence, that when the tranquillity and prosperity of the kingdom was restored under the government of Canute the Great, the shilling was restored to its former weight and value. This appears from the following law of that prince: ‘He who violates the protection of a church of the highest order, shall pay 5 pounds by the English law;—of the second order 120 shillings;—of the third order 60 shillings; of the lowest order, 30 shillings (94).’ In this law,



the mulcts to be paid for violating the protection of churches, according to their dignity, arise in the same proportion from the lowest to the highest; from which it follows, that as 30 shillings is the half of 60 shillings, and 60 shillings the half of 120 shillings; so 120 shillings is the half of five pounds. From this law, therefore, it is evident, that when it was made, there were 240 shillings in five pounds, or 48 shillings in one pound.

The above account of the Saxon money-pound is confirmed by the real weight of their pennies now remaining, which Mr. Folkes found to be at a medium  $22\frac{1}{2}$  Troy grains (95). This made their shilling, containing five pennies, to weigh  $112\frac{1}{2}$  Troy grains, and their pound, containing 48 shillings, to weigh 5400 Troy grains; which are the exact number of grains in the Tower pound; which we may therefore conclude, was the Anglo-Saxon money-pound. The pound they probably brought with them from the continent, as it is the same with the Colonia and Strasburgh pounds; and it continued to be their only money-pound through the whole of this period, and even down to the reign of Henry VII. when it was changed for the Troy pound, which is 360 grains, or three-fourths of a Troy ounce, heavier (96). This small difference between the Tower pound and the Troy pound is the reason that one pound of Anglo-Saxon money did not contain quite so much silver as three pounds of our present money, though in general calculations, where much exactness is not necessary, we have always stated them in that proportion. Here, however, it may be proper to state the exact proportion; which is this:—‘That one Anglo-Saxon money-pound contained as much silver as is now coined into £ 2 : 16 : 3 sterling.’

The real money-pound of the Saxons.

It cannot be denied that the Anglo-Saxons were acquainted with a pound which contained 15 ounces, which they used on some occasions, and for some purposes, though they did not use it in their mints. This pound is plainly mentioned in the following law of King Ethelred, preserved by Brompton, which (as I suspect) hath been the occasion of many mistakes: ‘I command those who have the keeping of the ports, and the col-

The mercantile pound of the Anglo-Saxons.

(95) Tables of Ancient Coins, p. 5.

(96) Clarke on Coins, p. 99.

‘lecting of the customs on goods, that, under the pain  
 ‘of my displeasure, they collect my money by the pound  
 ‘of the market; and that each of these pounds be so  
 ‘regulated and stamped as to contain 15 ounces (97).’  
 It is evident, both from the words and the intention of  
 this law, that the pound of 15 ounces which is men-  
 tioned in it, was not the money-pound, but the pound  
 of the market, or mercantile pound, by which the heavy  
 goods of merchants were weighed when they were ex-  
 ported or imported, and according to which the king’s  
 customs payable upon these goods were to be rated.  
 This law was probably procured by the people of Lon-  
 don, who were great friends to that unhappy king, and  
 afforded him protection in their city when he could not  
 find it in any other part of his dominions. It was evi-  
 dently intended to favour the merchants, and to secure  
 them from the exactions of the customers. This distinc-  
 tion between the mercantile and the money-pound was  
 not peculiar to the Anglo-Saxons, but was in use among  
 the Greeks, Romans, and all other trading nations, both  
 ancient and modern (98).

**The mark.** The mark, which is often mentioned in the laws and  
 histories of this period, was also a denomination of  
 money, and not a real coin; and, next to the pound,  
 it was the highest denomination then known in England.  
 It was not so properly an Anglo-Saxon as an Anglo-  
 Danish denomination, having been introduced by the  
 Danes, when they obtained a legal settlement in this  
 island, in the reign of Alfred the Great; for it appears  
 for the first time in the articles of agreement between  
 Alfred and Guthrum, the Danish king (99). That the  
 mark had its origin in Scandinavia, and was brought  
 from thence both into France and England, is confirm-  
 ed by two of the most learned antiquaries of the  
 north (100).

**Weight of the mark.** It would be quite improper to load the pages of a ge-  
 neral history with a critical examination of the senti-  
 ments of different writers concerning the weight and  
 value of the mark. It was long imagined that the mark

(97) Brompton inter decem Script. p. 899.

(98) Clarke on Coins, p. 85.

(99) Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 47.

(100) Arrgrim Jonas Crymogæa, l. i. c. 8. Sæmkrök de Jure  
 Sutenum, p. 113.

and the mancus (which will be by and by described) were the same. This opinion seems to have arisen from the resemblance of the two barbarous Latin words *marca* and *manca*; and was certainly a very great mistake, and the source of much perplexity and confusion. Without entering into any tedious investigations, it seems to be most probable, upon the whole,—‘ That the mark bore the same proportion to the pound, in the period we are now examining, and in every succeeding period, that it doth at present, viz. that it was then, as it is now, two-thirds of the weight and value of the pound.’ If this conjecture (for I shall call it no more) is well founded, the Anglo-Danish mark in this period must have weighed 8 Tower ounces, or 3600 Troy grains, of gold or silver; the mark of silver must have been equal in value to 160 Saxon pennies, and to 32 of the larger Saxon shillings, of 5 pennies each, and to 40 of the smaller Saxon shillings, of 4 pennies each. It must also have been equal in weight of silver to £ 1 : 17 : 9 of our present money; which is exactly two-thirds of £ 2 : 16 : 3, the weight in silver of the Saxon pound.

It was very easy for the Anglo-Saxons to discover this proportion between the Danish mark and their own pound; and when they had discovered it, nothing could be more reasonable than to keep these two denominations of money in the same proportion to each other, in all their various changes, as the only means of preventing confusion in their mercantile transactions. Nor is positive historical evidence wanting, that the Danish mark, when it was brought into England, was a weight of eight ounces, according to the above account. The Danish, Norwegian, and Icelandic mark (as we are told by Arngrim Jonas), weighed eight oræ or ounces of pure gold, or pure silver: and in the payment of taxes eight oræ were always paid for one mark (101). According to Stiernhöök, this was also the weight of the ancient Swedish mark: ‘ The mark was the most ancient, the most common, and the largest denomination of money, among all the nations of the North. Nor was it peculiar to them, but was known and used by the people of Holland, Germany, France, and England. The ancient mark of all these nations weighed eight ounces of pure gold, or pure silver (102).’ This was the

The mark  
brought  
from  
Scandina-  
via.

(101) Arngrim Jonas Crymogææ, l. i. c. 8.

(102) Stiernhöök de Jure Sueonum, p. 153.

mark that was brought into England by the Danes; and, after the accession of the Danish princes to the throne, was established by law; and the mulets that were to be paid by certain criminals, which had formerly been rated in pounds, shillings, and pence, were rated in marks, and their subdivisions. By one of these laws, the manbote of a villain or sokeman was rated at 12 oræ or ounces of silver; and the manbote of a freeman (which was the double of the other) was rated at 3 marks (103). From this we learn, that there were 24 ounces of silver in 3 marks, and consequently 8 ounces in 1 mark. This continued to be the weight of the money-mark in England as long as 12 ounces continued to be the weight of the money-pound (104).

Mercan-  
tile mark.

After the accession of the Danish kings to the English throne, they introduced their commercial mark, as well as their money mark; and all kinds of goods at the custom-houses, which had formerly been weighed by the Saxon commercial pound of fifteen ounces, were then weighed by the Danish commercial mark of twelve ounces. 'In the reign of Canute the Great, there were  
' two marks, the money mark, and the mercantile mark.  
' The money mark, by which pure gold and pure silver  
' were weighed, contained eight ounces, and the mer-  
' cantile mark, by which all other kinds of goods  
' were weighed, contained twelve ounces (105).' The reader cannot fail to take notice, that the same proportion was still observed between the Danish money mark and commercial mark, as between the Saxon money pound and commercial pound, &c. &c. the one was two-thirds of the other.

The man-  
cus.

The mancus is another species of money that is often mentioned in the laws and histories of the Anglo-Saxons, and of all the chief European nations, in the middle ages (106). It hath been much disputed, whether the mancus was a real coin, or only a denomination of money, like the pound and mark. Without giving a detail of the arguments on both sides of this question, which would be tedious, it seems to be most probable, that the mancus was a real gold coin; and that mancuses were coined by some of our Anglo-Saxon kings,

(103) Wilkins *Leges Saxon.*

(104) *Stow Chron.* p. 287.

(105) *Relenius ad Jus aulicum Canuti*, p. 703.

(106) *Du Cange Gloss. voc. Mancus.*



as well as by the sovereigns of several other nations of Europe, in the present period. This, it must be confessed, is directly contrary to the commonly-received opinion, that Henry III. was the first king of England who coined gold A. D. 1297 (107). But this opinion, though it hath long and universally prevailed, is chiefly founded on the negative argument, “That no English gold coins of greater antiquity have yet been found:” an argument very weak and inconclusive, and now quite destroyed by the actual discovery of some Anglo-Saxon gold coins (108). We have good reason, therefore, to believe the direct testimony of Aelfric, the grammarian, an Anglo-Saxon writer of eminent dignity and great learning; who expressly says,—“That though the Romans had many different names for their coins, the English had only three names for theirs, viz. mancuses, shillings, and pennies (109).” That the Saxons had several names of money, besides these, as pounds and marks, we have already seen; these three, therefore, must have been the names of real coins, as distinguished from mere denominations of money. But though we have sufficient evidence in general, that gold coins, and particularly mancuses, were struck by some of our Anglo-Saxon kings, we have no information by which of these kings in particular they were coined; because there are none of those ancient mancuses yet discovered.

We know with the greatest certainty what was the value of the Saxon gold mancus, and may from thence discover very nearly what was its weight. The same archbishop Aelfric, commonly called *the Grammarian*, tells us, that there were five pennies in one shilling, and thirty pennies in one mancus (110). If, therefore, there was such a coin as a silver mancus, which is not probable, it must have weighed 675 Troy grains, equal to 6 Saxon shillings, to 30 Saxon pennies, to the eighth part of a Tower pound, and to 7 shillings and a small fraction of our present money. If a gold mancus was to be exchanged for silver, or the value of it paid in silver, 6 Saxon shillings, or 30 Saxon pennies, were to be given

(107) Clarke on Coins, p. 373.

(108) Mr. Pegge's Dissertations on some Anglo-Saxon Remains.

(109) Aelfric Gram. Saxon. p. 52. Append. Somner's Saxon Diction.

(110) Aelfric Gram. p. 52.

for it. If the value of any given weight of gold was to the value of an equal weight of silver, as 12 to 1, in this period, as is generally supposed, then the weight of the gold mancus must have been the twelfth part of 675 Troy grains, or 56 Troy grains, or the eighth part of a Tower ounce. This was exactly the weight of a very numerous set of gold coins, which were current in the middle ages, not only over all Europe, but in many parts of Asia and Africa, though under different names. These were the mancusses or ducats of Italy, Germany, France, Spain, and Holland, the sultani of Constantinople and the East, the chequens of Barbary, and the sheriffs of Egypt, which were all of the same weight and value with the Anglo-Saxon mancus (111). This identity of the gold coins of so many different nations is an indication, that there was some commercial intercourse between them and must have been a great conveniency to merchants.

The ora. The ora was the next species of money that is mentioned in the laws and histories of the Anglo-Saxons; but whether it was a real coin, or only a denomination of money, still remains doubtful. This, as well as the mark, was introduced by the Danes; and the ora was in reality a subdivision of the mark. ‘ There were only two subdivisions (says Stiernhöök) of the mark, viz. the half-mark, and the eighth part, which was called the *ora*. Though this last is at present unknown to the English, there is sufficient evidence, that it was in use amongst them in ancient times, being carried from hence into their country by the Danes. The weight of the ora, as I have already observed, was one ounce, or the eighth part of a mark (112).’ Arngrim Jonas gives the same account of the origin, weight, or value of the ora (113). If there was such a silver coin, therefore, as the ora, it must have weighed one Tower ounce, or 450 Troy grains, equal to 4 of the larger Saxon shillings, and to 20 Saxon pennies, and to 4s. 8½d. of our present money. If there was no such coin as a silver ora, then they paid for every ora in an account, either 4 Saxon shillings, or 20 Saxon pennies. This continued to be the weight and value of the ora

(111) Clarke on Coins, p. 293.

(112) Stiernhöök de Jure Saxonum, p. 134.

(113) Crymogæa, l. i. c. 8.

till after the conclusion of this period, as appears from many passages in Doomſday-book (114).

There is hardly any species of money more frequently mentioned in the laws and histories of the Anglo-Saxons than the shilling. It was in shillings that they estimated the mulcts and penalties inflicted by their laws on those who were guilty of certain crimes; and in shillings they fixed the weregelds, or the prices of the lives and limbs of persons of all ranks (115). Payments, and the prices of commodities, were also generally rated in shillings. Notwithstanding this, it was long the universal opinion of antiquaries and historians, that the Anglo-Saxon shilling was a mere denomination of money, and not a real coin (116). This opinion, however, which is founded only on this, that none of these shillings have been yet discovered, is quite improbable, and contrary to the plainest testimony of several Anglo-Saxon writers, who certainly knew their own coins. That of archbishop Aelfric, already quoted, is perfectly plain, and ought to be decisive: ‘The English have only three names for their coins,—mancesses, shillings, and pennies.’ In the Saxon Bible, the Jewish shekels are sometimes translated by these two words, *silver shillings*, and sometimes by the word *silverings*, and sometimes by the word *shillings*; which plainly indicates, that there was such a coin of silver as a shilling, which on some occasions was, by way of eminence, called the *silvering*, as being the largest silver coin. The name of this coin, which in Saxon is spelled *scilling*, is evidently derived from *scilicetus*, the name of a Roman coin of the same weight and value; in imitation of which the Saxon shilling was coined. The very change of the weight of the Saxon shilling from 48 out of the pound of silver to 60, already mentioned, is a proof that it was a real coin, sometimes heavier and sometimes lighter. But whoever desires to see the arguments drawn out at full length in support of this opinion, ‘That the Saxon shilling was a real coin,’ must consult the learned work quoted below (117).

There is no difficulty in discovering the weight and value of the Saxon shilling with the greatest certainty and exactness. When 48 of these shillings were coined out of

The Anglo-Saxon shilling a real coin.

Its weight and value.

(114) Scriptores xv. a Gaelo edit. p. 764, 765.

(115) Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 45, 46.

(116) Chronicon Preciosum, p. 40.

(117) Clarke on Coins, p. 205—229,

the Tower pound of silver, weighing 5400 Troy grains, each of them must have weighed  $112\frac{1}{2}$  of these grains, equal to 5 Saxon pennies, of  $22\frac{1}{2}$  grains each, and to 1s. 2d. of our present money. When 60 of these shillings were coined out of a Tower pound of silver, each of them must have weighed 90 Troy grains, equal to 4 Saxon pennies, and to  $11\frac{1}{2}$ d. of our present money.

The  
thrimfa.

The thrimfa is another species of money which is sometimes mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon laws, particularly in those of Athelstan; and hath greatly perplexed our antiquaries and historians; some of them making it equal in value to 3 Saxon shillings, and others equal only to 1 Saxon penny; while others frankly confess their ignorance of its value (118). It appears, however, very evident, from an attentive examination of the several laws in which it occurs, that the thrimfa was (as its name imports) equal in value to three Saxon pennies. It seems to have been a real coin, contrived as the most convenient subdivision between the shilling and the penny. When the shilling contained 5 Saxon pennies, the thrimfa was three-fifths of it; and when the shilling contained 4 Saxon pennies, the thrimfa, which remained unaltered, was three-fourths of it. We have examples of both these proportions in the laws of king Athelstan. In one of these laws, which was made in the beginning of his reign, when the shilling was at its primitive value of 5 pennies, 2000 thrimfas, the weregeld of a thane by the law of East-Anglia, are said to be equal in value to 1200 shillings, the weregeld of a thane by the law of Mercia; from whence it appears, that the thrimfa was three-fifths of the shilling (119). In another of these laws, which was made near the end of his reign, when the shilling was brought down in weight and value to 4 Saxon pennies, it is said, that the weregeld of a ceorl, by the law of East-Anglia, was 266 thrimfas, which make 200 shillings, according to the Mercian law (120). From this law it appears, that the proportion between the thrimfa and the shilling was changed, and that the former was three-fourths of the

(118) Spelmanni Gloss. in voc. Thrimfa. Nicolson's Historical Library, p. 44. Brady's Hist. p. 68. Chron. preciosum, p. 28.

(119) Sommer. Gloss. in voc. Thrimfa. Lye's Dictionarium Saxonum.

(120) Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 71.

latter.



latter. According to the above account, the weight of the thrimfa must have been  $67\frac{1}{2}$  Troy grains, equal to 3 Saxon pennies, and to  $8\frac{1}{2}d.$  of our present money; and that 80 thrimfas must have been coined out of a Tower pound of silver. The currency of the thrimfa never was universal; and it seems to have been coined only for a short time, as it was found to be unnecessary. This is the true reason why it is not mentioned among the names of the Anglo-Saxon coins by archbishop Aelfric, as it had fallen into disuse before his time (121).

There is no kind of money more frequently mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon laws than the pending, pening, penninga, or penny. This was by far the most common, though not (as our antiquaries long imagined) the only coin, that was struck by the English princes of this period. The weight and value of the penny remained invariably the same through all the Saxon times, and are both perfectly well known. It was a small silver coin, of which 240 were coined out of a Tower pound of that metal, each penny weighing  $22\frac{1}{2}$  Troy grains, equal in weight and value to one of our present silver three-pences, all but  $1\frac{1}{2}$  Troy grain. Any number of the other denominations of money or coins might have been paid in these pennies without a fraction, by giving 240 of them for every pound, 160 for every mark, 20 for every mancus, 20 for every ora, 5 for every larger shilling, 4 for every lesser shilling, and 3 for every thrimfa. The far greatest part of the current cash of England in this period consisted of these small silver pennies; which is the reason that so many of them are still preserved, when almost all the other Saxon coins are lost. In that great scarcity of silver that prevailed over all Europe, from the fall of the Roman empire to the discovery of America, the penny was a very proper size for the most common current coin; because it was not too large for small payments, nor too small, in sufficient numbers, for the greatest.

The sceata, which is sometimes mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon laws, was certainly a real coin, both because its name properly signifies a coin or piece of money, and because it was too small for a mere denomination. The coin called *sceata* doth not appear to have been always of

The Anglo-Saxon penny.

The sceata.

the same weight and value ; but seems to have been generally one of the smallest of their current coins ; which gave occasion to that form of an oath, which every one who denied a debt in a court of justice was obliged to take,—‘ I swear, by the name of the living God, that I ‘ am not indebted to Neither shilling or sceata, or their ‘ worth ;’ i. e. I am not owing him either a great sum, like a shilling, which was the largest silver coin, nor a small sum, like the sceata, which was one of the smallest (122). In the laws of Ethelbright, which are the most ancient of the Anglo-Saxon laws, the sceata is often mentioned, and appears to have been a very small coin, of which twenty were equal to a shilling ; and consequently it weighed only  $5\frac{1}{2}$  Troy grains (123). But in the laws of king Athelstan, which were made more than three centuries after the former, the sceata is evidently the same coin with the Saxon penny. For the weregeld of a king, in one of these laws, is fixed at 30,000 sceatas, which are said to be equal to 120 Saxon pounds (124). Now, 30,000 pennies are exactly equal to 125 Saxon pounds ; which shews, that if this weregeld was paid, not in actual weight, but in such a number of sceatas or pennies, by tale, then an addition of 5 pounds was to be paid, to make up for the deficiency of weight occasioned by the wear of these pennies. In general, therefore, we may conclude, that during the greatest part of this period, the sceata and the penny signified the same coin ; and this is no doubt the reason that archbishop Aelfric doth not mention the sceata among the names of the Anglo-Saxon coins, because it was the same with the penny (125).

The Anglo-Saxon penny valuable.

Though the Saxon silver penny or sceata was a small coin, it was of considerable value, and would then have purchased as much provisions, or goods of any kind, as five of our shillings will do at present. The price of the best sheep in England, for example, was fixed by the laws of king Athelstan, near the middle of the tenth century, at four of these pennies ; for there were only four pennies in the shilling when that law was made (126). By the same law, an ox was only valued at 30, a cow at 20, and a sow at 10, of these pennies.

(122) Wilkins *Leges Saxon.* p. 64.

(123) *Id.* p. 5. 6.

(124) *Id.* p. 64.

(125) Clarke on Coins, p. 428—430.

(126) Wilkins *Leges Saxon.* p. 56.

As it would be inconvenient, at present, to have no smaller coins than crown pieces, so it would have been equally inconvenient, in the Saxon times, to have had no coins of less value than those penny-pieces. To prevent this, they coined halfings, or halfpennies of silver, weighing 11 Troy grains, worth about three halfpence of our money; and feorthlings, or the fourth of a penny, weighing  $5\frac{1}{2}$  Troy grains, worth about three farthings of our money. Both these coins are mentioned in the Saxon gospels; which is a sufficient proof that they had such coins when these gospels were translated. But, after all, when many things were so very cheap, it would still have been inconvenient to have had no coin of less value than the silver farthing; and therefore they coined a brass coin of the value of half a farthing of their money, and of a farthing and half of ours. These brass coins, which were called *styca*, are mentioned also in the Saxon gospels; and a considerable number of them belonging to several Northumbrian kings, have been found, and published (127).

Having thus given an account of the weight and value of the several denominations of money, and real coins, that were in use among the Anglo-Saxons in the present period, it may not be improper to place the result of the whole under the eye of the reader in the following table, that the inspection of it may enable him to discover, at one glance, the real weight and value of any sum of money he happens to meet with in the Saxon history.

Result of  
the above  
enumeration.

(127) Hickeysii Dissertat. Epist. p. 182.

*Table of the names of the Anglo-Saxon denominations of money, and of real coins; with the weight of each of them in Troy grains, and value in the present money of Great Britain.*

Names.	Troy grains.	Present value.			
		£.	s.	d.	q.
The pound, -	5400	2	16	3	
The mark, -	3600	1	17	9	
The mancus of gold,	56		7	0	1
The mancus of silver,	675		7	0	1
The ora, -	450		4	8	1
The greater shilling,	112½		1	2	
The smaller shilling,	90			11	1
The thrimfa, -	67½			8	2
The penny and sceata,	22½			2	3
The halfling, -	11			1	½
The fourthling, -	5½				3
The flyca, a brass coin,					1 ½

Foreign  
gold coins  
current in  
England.

Besides their own coins, those of all the other nations of Europe with whom they had any commerce, were current among the Anglo-Saxons in the present period. The gold coins that were current in England, and indeed over all Europe, for some ages before the Norman conquest, were of these three kinds:—1. The old Byzantine solidi, commonly called *Byzants*;—2. The most ancient Frank solidi;—3. The lesser Frank solidi of twelve-pence (128). Though the Byzants were coined at Constantinople, or Byzantium, from whence they derived their name; yet they were well known in England, and great payments were often made in Byzantines. Thus the famous St. Dunstan purchased the estate of Hindon in Middlesex of king Edgar, for 200 Byzantines (129). Out of the Greek pound of gold (which was the same with the Tower pound) 72 Byzantines were coined, each weighing 73 Troy grains, and worth 40 Saxon pennies, 8 Saxon shillings, and nine shillings and four-pence halfpenny of our present money (130). Few coins ever had a longer or more universal currency than these

(128) Clarke on Coins, p. 246.

(129) Camden's Remains, p. 182.

(130) *Leges Saxonum*, tit. 47. § 4. *Cod. Theod.* l. 12. tit. 7. *Cod. Ju. in l. 10* tit. 70.



Byzantines, having been current from the very beginning to the end of the Eastern empire, not only in all its provinces, but also in all those countries which had been provinces of the Western empire, and amongst others in Britain (131). The ancient Frank solidus was the same in weight and value with the Saxon mancus already described. The lesser Frank solidus was worth no more than twelve Saxon pennies, or two shillings and ten pence of our present money (132). It was from the use of this lesser Frank solidus that the present division of our money-pound into 20 shillings, each shilling containing 12 pence, was introduced. Besides these gold coins, there were also some foreign silver coins current in England in this period; but a more minute enumeration is unnecessary, and would be tedious.

Though coins may be of the legal weight when they are struck, they are apt to lose something of that weight by long currency. To make up this deficiency of weight occasioned by wearing, it was a custom, probably a law, among the Anglo-Saxons, when they paid a sum of money by tale, to pay one twenty-fourth part more than the nominal sum. For example, though there were only 48 Saxon shillings coined out of a pound of silver, yet when a merchant paid a debt of one pound in shillings that had been some time in the circle, he paid 50 of these shillings instead of 48. This is the reason that the same mulct or fine that is called two pounds in one law, is called one hundred shillings in another; four additional shillings being paid to make up for the presumed deficiency in weight (133). When a debt of one pound was paid in pennies, which were by far the most common coins, 250 of these pennies were paid instead of 240; which were the real number coined out of a pound. Thus the weregeld of a king is declared to be 30,000 pennies, or 120 pounds; but 30,000 pennies are really 125 pounds; because 5 pounds (or the twenty-fourth part of the whole sum) were paid to make up the deficiency of weight in the current pennies (134). When any commodities are exceedingly scarce and valuable, as gold and silver were in the ages we are now examining, men

Incremen-  
tum paid  
in the  
Saxon  
times.

(131) Lindenbrog. Gloss. voce Solidus.

(132) Clarke on Coins, p. 329

(133) Wilkins *Leges Saxon.* p. 35. 38.

(134) *Id.* p. 72.

are very anxious not to be defrauded of the smallest part of them to which they are entitled.

**Fineness of  
the Saxon  
coins.**

As the weight is one capital consideration in the affair of coins; so their fineness, or the real proportion of pure gold, or pure silver, in them, is another. It was soon discovered, that a small mixture of some baser metal, commonly called *alloy*, with gold and silver in coins, gave them an additional hardness, and made them more durable. This therefore was admitted; but the greatest care was taken to ascertain the proportion between the pure gold or silver and the alloy, with the most minute exactness. The standard of the Anglo-Saxon money, as found by trials made upon their coins, was nine parts of pure silver, and one part of copper; and very severe penalties were inflicted by their laws on those mint-masters who made money of a baser kind. By a law of Athelstan, a monetary who coined money below the legal standard, either in weight or fineness, was to have his right hand cut off, and nailed upon the door of his mint; but by a posterior one of Ethelred, those who were guilty of this crime were to be put to death (135). All coins that were agreeable to the legal standard in these two respects, of weight and fineness, were declared by law to be the current coins of the kingdom; and none were permitted to refuse them in payments.

**Art of  
coining.**

Though their weight and purity are the two capital considerations in the affair of coins; yet the legends and impresses which they bear, and the degrees of art and elegance with which they are fabricated, merit some attention in every period from the antiquary and historian. The art of coining money was in a very imperfect state among the Anglo-Saxons. This is evident from the inspection of their silver pennies, or the plates of them, which have been published in the works quoted below (136). These pennies are very thin; and the relief of the letters and figures upon them very low and faint. On one side they commonly bear the prince's head by whose authority they were coined, with his name and his title in Latin (*Rex*), and in a few instances in Saxon (*CYNING*). The letters are chiefly Roman, with

(135) Wilkins *Leges Saxon.* p. 69—118.

(136) Camden *Britann.* vol. 1. *Introd.* p. 165—203. Hicckel. *Thesaur.* Dissertat. Epist. p. 101—132.

a mixture of Saxon, and for the most part very rudely formed. The reverses are various; but many of them contain only the names of the mint-master, and of the city where they were coined. For the satisfaction of such readers as have not an opportunity of viewing these coins, or the tables of them which have been published, two of the most ancient, and one of the most modern of them, are engraved on the plate of the map in the Appendix, Fig. 1, 2, 3.

Fig. 1. is a penny of Edwin (137), the first Christian king of Northumberland, and most probably the founder of the city of Edinburgh, who flourished from A. D. 617 to A. D. 633. On one side is the king's head, crowned with the inscription *EDPIN. REX. A.*; in which all the letters are Roman except the Saxon *P* (*w*). On the reverse is a cross in the centre (a proof that Edwin had embraced Christianity when this coin was struck), with this inscription, *SEFWEL ON EO FER*; which signifies *Sifwel* (the name of the mint-minister) at York.

The second is a penny of Adulf, who was a king of the East-Angles A. D. 664. On one side is the king's head, with this inscription, *ADULFIUS PRISIN*. Several explanations have been given of the last of these words, but none of them are without difficulties (138). On the reverse is a cross erected upon a globe, with a serpent hanging as lifeless on the tranverse of the cross, and this inscription, *VICTURIA ADULFO*.

The last is a penny of king Harold, who fell in the battle of Hastings, and was succeeded by William the Conqueror. On one side is a sceptre and the king's head crowned, with *HAROLD REX ANGL*. On the reverse the word *PAX* in the centre, and around it *VLFGEAT ON GLE*; which is *Wlfgeat* (the name of the mint-master) at Gloucester.

It is quite impossible to discover, with any degree of certainty, the quantity of current coin in England in this period. On some occasions, very considerable sums are mentioned. The small kingdom of Kent is said to have paid to Ina king of Wessex, A. D. 694, no less than thirty thousand pounds, equal in quantity of silver to £ 84,375 of our present money, and in value and efficacy

(137) This is controverted by Mr. Pegge, Dissertation 2.

(138) Clarke on Coins, p. 417.

to more than eight millions sterling (139). This sum is so enormous for so small a territory, that some mistake must certainly have been committed by the transcribers of the Saxon chronicle; and therefore no inference can be drawn from this passage. If a historian may be allowed to hazard a conjecture, I should suppose, that *punda* (pounds) had been inserted by a mistake instead of *peninga* (pennies), which was probably the true reading. For Ina's quarrel with the people of Kent was, that they had killed Mul, the brother of Ceadwalla, king of Wessex, his immediate predecessor; and therefore all that he could demand from them, by the established laws of the heptarchy, was the payment of the wergeld of a king, which was 30,000 pennies (140). Even this sum (£ 351 : 11 : 3 of our money), trifling as it may appear to us, would not be easily paid by the small kingdom of Kent, after it had been three times plundered by the West-Saxon armies in the space of eight years. Though Alfred the Great was one of the richest of our Anglo-Saxon kings, he bequeathed no more by his last will than £ 500 to each of his two sons, and £ 100 to each of his three daughters (141). This was no more than £ 1406 : 5 : 0 of our money to a king's son, and £ 281 : 5 : 0 to a king's daughter: a sufficient proof of the great scarcity of money in England in the age of Alfred the Great. Nor was money more plentiful in France at that time than it was in England; for Charles the Bald king of France, who was cotemporary with Alfred, when he meditated an expedition into Italy A. D. 875, to seize the Imperial crown, could raise no more money in his whole kingdom than 10,000 marks, or £ 18,375 sterling (142). The cash of England seems to have increased considerably in the course of the tenth century, in the reigns of Edward the Elder, Athelstan, and Edgar the Peaceable, who were great encouragers of foreign trade. This enabled the English to pay the prodigious subsidies to the Danes in the unfortunate reign of Ethelred the Unready; which in twenty-three years, from A. D. 991 to A. D. 1014, amounted to no less than £ 167,000 of Saxon money, equal in quan-

(139) Chron. Saxon. p. 48.

(140) Id. *ibid.*

(141) Testamentum Alfredi, apud Asser. p. 23.

(142) Louvainvilliers, p. 114.



tity of silver to £ 469,687 : 10 : 0 sterling (143). It appears, however, that they were so much exhausted and impoverished by these payments, that they were obliged to submit to the Danish yoke, as the only means of preserving themselves and their country from ruin. Upon the whole, we have good reason to believe, that there was not one fiftieth part of the cash in England, at any one time, during this period which we are now delineating, that is in it at present; and that this observation might be extended to almost every other country in Europe.

As no coins of the kings of the Scots, Picts, or Welsh, who flourished in this period, have been discovered, it hath been generally believed, that none of these princes coined any money. But this is very improbable on many accounts. The low countries of Scotland to the south of the frith of Forth, had been occupied by a colony of Saxons under Oëta and Ebeffa in the fifth century, and became a part of the kingdom of Northumberland about the middle of the sixth. In this state these countries continued, both inhabited by Saxons and governed by Saxon princes, who coined money, to the fall of the Northumbrian kingdom about the beginning of the tenth century. Now it is hardly possible, that the Scots and Picts, who were such near neighbours to the Saxons for so many ages, and had so much intercourse with them, both of a friendly and hostile nature, could remain ignorant of the use of money, and the art of coining it. At least, when the Scots kings obtained the dominion of the country between the Forth and Tweed, about the middle of the tenth century, they must have learned from their Saxon subjects the art of coining money, and must have exercised it as a part of their prerogative. This money we may be certain was not very plentiful, and therefore it hath totally disappeared. It is still more improbable, that the Britons, after they retired into Wales, were ignorant of the use and art of coining money, when their ancestors the provincial Britons were so well acquainted with both. It appears evidently from many of their laws, that the Welsh princes of this period did actually coin money. By one of these laws, the coining of money is declared

Whether  
the Scots,  
Picts, and  
Britons  
coined  
money or  
not in this  
period.

(143) Spelman Gloss. voce Danegeld.

to be one of the four unalienable prerogatives of the kings of Wales (144): a ridiculous declaration, if it was known that no money was ever coined in Wales: The kings of England imposed a certain tribute on the kings of Wales, part of which was to be paid in money; which they never would have done, if they had known that these princes had no money of their own. The salaries of the great officers in the courts of the kings of Wales were paid in money; and the prices of all commodities were rated by the laws of Wales in money. Nay, in these laws, both gold and silver coins are directly mentioned; which is certainly a much stronger evidence that there were such coins, than the bare disappearance of them is that they never existed (145). But though we have good reason to believe, from these and many other testimonies which might be produced from their laws and history, that the Welsh princes of this period did coin money; yet we have no reason to suppose that their coins were very plentiful, when those of their richer neighbours, the Anglo-Saxons, were so scarce. The smallness of the number of these Welsh coins, the injuries of time, wars, and revolutions, and the long subjection of that country to the crown of England, are the true reasons why all these coins have disappeared; though it is not impossible that some of them may be yet discovered.

Prices of  
commodities.

When money was so scarce in all parts of Britain, England not excepted, we may be certain that the prices of commodities in general, and particularly of such as were plentiful, would be very low. Of this we have the clearest positive evidence, in the few remaining monuments of those ancient times in which the prices of various commodities are mentioned. How amazingly low, for example, was the price of land? Some very clear evidences have already been produced, to which many more might be added, to prove, that the most common price of an acre of land, of the very best quality in the Anglo-Saxon times, was no more than sixteen Saxon pennies, or about four shillings of our money. Must it not appear incredible to us, that our ancestors, about eight or nine hundred years ago, paid as much money for four sheep as for an acre of the best arable

(144) *Leges Wallice*, p. 71.

(145) *Id.* p. 395.

land?

land? This very strange, but well-attested fact, is not only a proof of the scarcity of money and of the low state of agriculture; but seems to indicate a more scanty population in those times than is commonly imagined: for hardly any thing but a great want of people to occupy the country could have made land of so little value in proportion to other things. By the Anglo-Saxon laws, certain prices were set upon all animals, men themselves not excepted, which were to be paid by those who destroyed them; and these were no doubt the same prices for which such animals were usually purchased in the markets. In the laws of Ethelred the Unready, which were made near the end of the tenth or beginning of the eleventh century, are the following prices; which we shall give both in Saxon and Sterling money (146).

Price		Saxon.			Sterling.		
		£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.
Of a man or slave,	-	1	0	0	2	16	3
Of a horse,	-	30	0		1	15	2
Of a mare or colt,	-	20	0		1	3	5
Of an ass or mule,	-	12	0		14		1
Of an ox,	-	6	0		7	0	$\frac{1}{2}$
Of a cow,	-	5	4		5		6
Of a swine,	-	1	3		1	10	$\frac{1}{2}$
Of a sheep,	-	1	0		1		2
Of a goat,	-			2			5 $\frac{1}{2}$

From the above table it plainly appears, that an Anglo-Saxon, in the reign of king Ethelred, could have purchased twenty horses, or mares, or mules, or oxen, or cows, or swine, or sheep, or goats, to say nothing of men, for the same quantity of silver that an Englishman must now pay for one of these animals of the middle sort. This seems to be as near as possible the true proportion between the value of money in the present times, and of those which we are now examining, in the purchase of these most necessary and useful animals, and of all kinds of provisions; except in times of famine. In some other things, however the proportion was very different. In the purchase of land, for example, money was several hundred times more valuable than it is at present; but in the purchase of books, it was not really

of so great value as it is at this moment. So much hath the value of the former increased by the improvements of agriculture, and the increase of trade and population, and so much hath the pecuniary value of the latter decreased by the most useful inventions of paper and printing, by which books are multiplied almost *ad infinitum*. Such of our readers as desire to see a more full and minute enumeration of the prices of animals, and of all their members, in this period (from the head of a king to the tail of a cat), may consult the work quoted below; which will suggest a thousand reflections concerning the different estimations of things, and the different tastes and desires of mankind in different circumstances (147). How much, for example, must we be surprised to see, that by the established laws of one part of this island, and most probably of the whole, the price of a hawk, or of a grayhound, was once the very same with the price of a man; and that there was a time, when the robbing a hawk's nest, was as great a crime in the eye of the law, and as severely punished, as the murder of a Christian (148)?

(147) *Leges Wallicæ*, p. 230—279.(148) *Id. ibid.*



T H E

H I S T O R Y

O F

G R E A T B R I T A I N.

B O O K II.

C H A P. VII.

*The history of the manners, virtues, vices, remarkable customs, language, dress, diet, and diversions, of the people of Great Britain, from the arrival of the Saxons, A. D. 449, to the landing of William Duke of Normandy, A. D. 1066.*

THE honour and happiness of nations, as well as of particular persons, depend more on their manners than on their situation and circumstances. An active, brave, intelligent, and virtuous people, cannot be contemptible in any condition, nor unhappy in any habitable climate. Such a people, if they do not change their manners, will soon improve their circumstances, and convert the most inhospitable deserts, if they are not naturally incapable of vegetation, into pleasant and fertile fields, crowded with inhabitants, and adorned with cities, towns, and villages. We need look no further than to our own American colonies for the most agreeable and convincing evidence of the truth of this assertion. Those countries

Happiness of nations depends more on their manners than on their circumstances.

countries which were, not very long ago, covered with almost impenetrable forests, the haunts of wild beasts and naked savages, are now become fertile, rich, and populous provinces, and are daily improving in all these particulars. On the other hand, nations corrupted by long and great prosperity, become luxurious, effeminate, and licentious in their manners, are objects of contempt and pity in the most flourishing circumstances. Restless, peevish, and discontented, amidst the greatest affluence, insatiable in their avarice, unbounded in their ambition, they are on the brink of ruin, when they seem to have attained the pinnacle of human grandeur. History affords too many examples of mighty nations, whose destruction hath been occasioned by the corruption of their manners, and who have been ruined by their own follies and vices, rather than by the arms of their enemies. For this, and many other reasons, the history of the prevailing character and reigning manners of a nation, in every period, is both the most useful and amusing part of its history, and merits the most particular attention.

People of  
Britain of  
two kinds.

Great Britain, in this period, was inhabited by several distinct nations, which formed so many different states and kingdoms. All these nations, however, with respect to their manners, customs, languages, &c. may be divided into these two classes, viz. 1. The posterity of the ancient Britons, who were left in the peaceable possession of the whole island by the Romans at their departure; and who continued in the possession of Wales, and the far greatest part of Scotland, to the end of this period. For though these Britons were divided into different states, and unhappily engaged in war against each other, their national characters, manners, languages, &c. were very much the same. 2. The several nations who came from Germany and Scandinavia, and made conquests and procured settlements in Britain, in the course of this period. For though these nations were called by different names, as Angles, Jutes, Saxons, and Danes, they were all descended from the same origin, spoke the same language, and had the same national manners and customs.

Not necessary to delineate the manners of the

The manners, &c. of the ancient Britons and Caledonians, the original inhabitants of this island, have been so fully delineated in the seventh chapter of the first book of this work, that it will not be necessary to give a minute

nute detail of those of their posterity, who form the first of these two classes, in the present period. It would be impossible to do this, without repeating what has been already said on those subjects. For the people of Wales, and of the highlands of Scotland, the genuine descendants of the ancient Britons and Caledonians; appear to have had the same manners and national character in this as in the preceding period; and both these nations have been very remarkable for their tenacious adherence to the customs of their ancestors through a long succession of ages. This hath been owing,—to their pride of their antiquity,—to their national animosity against their nearest neighbours, kept constantly alive by mutual injuries,—to the nature of their country,—and to their want of commerce, or other intercourse with foreign nations; and not—to their want of capacity for improvement.

This is the first opportunity we have had of examining the manners, &c. of the second of the above classes, the nations who came from Germany and Scandinavia, and settled in Britain, in the course of this period. This must therefore be the chief subject of the present chapter. A curious and interesting subject, which merits a most careful and attentive investigation! For the far greatest part of the present inhabitants of England, and even of the south-east parts of Scotland, being descended from those Scandinavian and German nations, must wish to see a distinct and faithful picture of their remote ancestors, whose blood is still flowing in their veins, whom they still resemble in their persons, and from whom they derive many remarkable peculiarities in their national character and manners. In drawing this picture, a sacred regard to truth (which I have spared no pains to discover) hath been my only guide; and this shall be my only apology to those who think it not so fair, and free from blemishes, as they expected. Our Anglo-Saxon and Danish ancestors must indeed appear to great disadvantage in many respects, if they are compared with their posterity in the present age, who have been so much enlightened, improved, and polished, by the discoveries of latter ages, especially since the revival of learning and the reformation of religion. But they will very well bear a comparison with their cotemporaries, in the other nations of Europe; with whom alone they ought to be compared.

Scots and  
Welsh in  
this pe-  
riod.

Manners  
of the An-  
glo-Sax-  
ons and  
Danes the  
chief sub-  
ject of this  
chapter.

The climate.

We have no account of any remarkable change in the climate of Great Britain in the course of this period (as we had in the former), that could much affect the persons or manners of its inhabitants. We hear indeed of several plagues, which raged with great violence, and swept away great numbers of men, as well as of other animals; but these do not seem to have been more frequent, or more destructive, in this than in other periods of equal length. Famines indeed were both very frequent and very severe in those ages; but these were rather owing to the imperfect state of agriculture, than to any extraordinary inclemency of the seasons.

Face of the country.

The face of the country suffered a very great and fatal change after the departure of the Romans. Many fine towns, villages, and country seats, were reduced to ruins, by the incessant and destructive wars of the Scots, Picts, Saxons, and Danes; great numbers of gardens, orchards, and well-cultivated fields, had their fences broken down, and lay neglected; and the whole country, in one word, wore a dreary uncomfortable aspect during a great part of this period; which was partly the consequence, and partly the cause, of several imperfections in the characters of its inhabitants (1).

Persons of the Anglo-Saxons.

The Anglo-Saxons and Danes, who came from Germany and Scandinavia, and settled in Britain, are described by all the ancient writers who were acquainted with them, as remarkably tall, strong, and robust in their persons. This advantage they derived from their ancestors, and communicated to their posterity. For all the Greek and Roman authors who speak of the ancient Germans, the ancestors of the Anglo-Saxons, represent them as superior to all the rest of mankind in stature (2). Nor did their posterity degenerate in this respect after their settlement in this island, but still continued to be remarkable among the nations of Europe for the largeness of their limbs and height of their stature; but still more remarkable for the elegance of their shape, the fairness of their complexions, and fineness of their hair (3). These were the three things which attracted the notice and

(1) *Historia Gildæ, et Epistola Gildæ passim.*

(2) *Cæsar, l. 1. c. 39. Mela, l. 3. c. 3. Columella, l. 3. c. 8. Vegetius, l. 1. c. 1. Strabo, l. 7. p. 290.*

(3) *Bedæ Hist. Ecclesiæ, l. 2. c. 1. Alcuin. apud Gale, t. 1. p. 793.*



excited the admiration of Gregory the Great, when he beheld some English youths exposed to sale in the market-place at Rome. He was so much struck with the beauty of their persons, that when he was told, that they were named *Engliſh* (Anglos), and that they and their country were not yet converted to Christianity, he broke out into this exclamation: ‘How lamentable is it, that the prince of darkness should have such beautiful subjects, and that a nation so amiable in their bodies should have none of the charms of divine grace in their souls! Their form is truly angelic, and they are fit to be the companions of the angels in heaven (4)!’ We meet with several examples, in the writers of this period, of English youths preserved from death on account of the beauty of their persons, after they had been condemned by their enemies, and were on the point of being executed (5): a sufficient proof, that there must have been something uncommonly engaging in the aspect and form of these youths, which made so strong an impression on the hearts of enemies no way famous for tenderness or humanity. Their hair, as well as their complexions, were generally fair; but in various degrees; those of the Danes, who chiefly resided in the kingdom of Northumberland, being frequently red (6). Their eyes, which were commonly blue, are said to have had something peculiarly stern and intimidating in them when they were inflamed with anger (7). Like the ancient Germans, from whom they were descended, and to whom they bore a very great resemblance, in their persons, they were more capable of bearing hunger and cold than thirst and heat (8). When the persons of the males among the Anglo-Saxons were so agreeable in their form, we may be almost certain, that those of their females were still more fair and beautiful. Many evidences of this might be produced from books; but this will not be thought necessary by those who have the pleasure of conversing daily with their amiable daughters, who are not excelled in personal charms by any women in the world.

As good health and long life depend very much on the natural soundness and vigour of the body, and the

Longevity  
of the  
Anglo-  
Saxons.

(4) Bedæ, Hist. Eccles. l. 2. c. 1.

(5) Eddius Vita Wilf. c. 6.

(6) Cluver. p. 96.

(7) Pittoulur, t. 1. p. 198. (8) Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 4.

right configuration of its various parts, we have reason to presume, that many of the Anglo-Saxons enjoyed a great degree of health, and that some of them prolonged their lives to an uncommon date. Of this last we meet with several examples in the remaining monuments of their history; from which the following is selected as one of the most remarkable and best attested. When the famous Turketul, who had been chancellor of England, and one of the greatest warriors and statesmen of his time, retired from the world, and became abbot of Croiland, he found five very aged monks in that monastery, to whom he paid particular attention. Father Clarenbald, the eldest of those monks, died A. D. 973, after he had completed the 168th year of his age; the second, who was named *Father Sawwiling*, died that same year, at the age of 142; the third, who was called *Father Turgar*, died the year after, in the 115th year of his age. The two other monks, named *Brune* and *Ajo*, died about the same time: and though their ages were not exactly known, yet it cannot be supposed that they were much younger than Father Turgar; because they had both seen the old abbey of Croiland, which had been destroyed by the Danes A. D. 870. These facts are related with much confidence, and many other circumstances, by Ingulphus, who was also abbot of Croiland, and wrote from the historical register of that abbey (9).

Genius of  
the Anglo-  
Saxons.

It is much easier to form a judgment of the bodily than of the mental endowments of any people. The former manifest themselves by mere instinct, and are visible to every eye; but the latter require much culture to unfold and render them conspicuous. We have no reason, however, to suspect, that the Anglo-Saxons were naturally defective in genius, or in any of the faculties of their minds; though the universal darkness and ignorance of those ages in which they lived, prevented the cultivation of their genius and the improvement of their faculties. Some few of them, as Aldhelm, Beda, Alcuin, Alfred the Great, &c. were endowed with such an uncommon degree of genius, and strength of mind, that they overcame, in a great measure, all the disadvantages of their situation, and shone with a lustre far superior to their contemporaries. It is certainly no slight presump-

tion, that the people of England, in those times, enjoyed their full proportion of genius, that the three most learned and ingenious men that appeared in Europe in the space of six centuries were Englishmen, viz. Bede, Alcuin, and Alfred.

A writer who wishes to draw an agreeable picture of the dispositions, manners, and moral characters, of the Anglo-Saxons, will find very few materials for that purpose in their own cotemporary writers. This I may presume to say with some assurance, as I have perused every remaining monument of those times that I could procure, with a direct view to this object, with very little success. For though those ancient authors exceed all the bounds of truth and probability, in heaping the most extravagant praises on certain favourite saints, and a few great benefactors to the church, they are very far from giving a favourable character of their countrymen in general, especially of the laity. On the contrary, they frequently paint them in the most odious colours, and represent them as a people destitute of every virtue, and stained with every vice. To give many examples of this would be disagreeable: the following short one, translated from a Saxon sermon, preached by one of their own bishops A. D. 1012, will be a sufficient specimen of their way of painting the manners of their countrymen. ‘It cannot be denied, for it is too evident, that this nation is plunged into innumerable crimes and vices; as covetousness, theft, robbery, gluttony, heathenish impurities, fornications, adulteries, incests, plottings, treacheries, treasons, lyings, perjuries, cruelties, murders, parricides.—The far greatest part of the people of this country, as I have already said, are deplorably corrupted in their manners, and become murderers, parricides, priest-killers, monastery-haters, violators of sacred orders, false-swearers, apostates, betrayers of their masters, thieves, robbers, and plunderers. Many of the women also are whores, adulteresses, child-murderers, and witches. In a word, it is impossible either to number or give names to all their wicked and flagitious deeds (10).’ A horrid and shocking picture! but it is probably much more deformed than the original. For there have been ecclesiastics in all ages, who delighted

Anglo-Saxon authors give an unfavourable character of their countrymen.

to declaim with vehemence against the vices of their times and countries, and when they were heated with their favourite subject, have loaded them with every crime their imaginations could invent, without a very scrupulous regard to truth. The good bishop Lupus, the author of the above sermon, seems to have been one of this stamp. It is a misfortune that we have no means of viewing the characters of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors, but through the dark medium presented to us by bigotted and gloomy monks, who were the only writers of those times. For as those monks could perceive no vices in their patrons, who were regularly conveyed to heaven in the arms of angels; so they could discover no virtues in their opposers, who were as constantly dispatched to hell in the claws of devils; and therefore their representations of the characters, either of their friends or enemies, are far from meriting an implicit faith.

Their piety tinged with superstition.

A devout regard to sacred things, and the offices of religion, may be justly reckoned among the virtues of the Anglo-Saxons, after their conversion to Christianity. Of this, if it were necessary, innumerable evidences might be produced. It must, however, be confessed, that their piety was not of the purest kind, but was tinged with the absurd and wretched superstitions of the ages in which they flourished; for which they are rather to be pitied than reproached. But their submitting to the expences, pains, and labours, with which their superstitious observances were attended, is at least an evidence, that they were disposed to have been religious if they had been right instructed. It may not therefore be improper, in this place, to take a short view of some of those things which are most remarkable in the religious principles and practices of the Anglo-Saxons.

Their fondness for the monastic life.

The English, in this period, were very remarkable for their extravagant fondness for the monastic life; which was universally esteemed the surest road to heaven. This fondness for ending their days in those seats of sloth and superstition, not only prevailed among the clergy, and persons of inferior stations, but those in the highest ranks of life were so much infected with it, that no fewer than ten kings, and eleven queens, among the Anglo-Saxons, besides nobles without number, in the course of this period, abandoned the world, and retired into monaste-



ries. This pernicious infatuation is severely censured, and bitterly lamented, by venerable Bede, as destructive to his country, by depriving it of its governors and protectors (11). But almost all the other monks and clergy acted a very different part, and employed a thousand arts to persuade kings and nobles to build and enrich monasteries. This, they assured them, was the most effectual way of obtaining the pardon of all their sins, securing the divine favour, and procuring all manner of blessings from heaven.

When earl Alwine, who was the greatest and richest man in England in the reign of Edgar the Peaceable, consulted St. Oswald, bishop of York, what he should do to obtain the pardon of his sins; the pious prelate made him the following eloquent harangue: ‘ I beseech your excellency to believe, that those holy men who have retired from the world, and spend their days in poverty and prayer, are the greatest favourites of Heaven, and the greatest blessings to the world. It is by their merits that the divine judgments are averted and changed; that plagues and famines are removed; that healthful seasons and plentiful harvests are procured; that states and kingdoms are governed; that prisons are opened, captives delivered, shipwrecks prevented, the weak strengthened, and the sick healed: that I may say all in one word, it is by their merits that this world, so full of wickedness, is preserved from immediate ruin and destruction. I intreat you therefore, my dear son, if you have any place in your estate fit for that purpose, that you immediately build a monastery, and fill it with holy monks, whose prayers will supply all your defects, and expiate all your crimes (12).’ The building of Ramsey abbey was the consequence of this fine speech. The clergy in this period constantly inculcated upon the rich, that the world was near an end, and the day of judgment at hand; which procured many donations to the church, as appears from the charters still extant, beginning with these words:—‘ since the end of the world is at hand,’ or words to that purpose (13). What was given by rich

Arts of the  
clergy to  
persuade  
great men  
to build  
monastie-  
ries.

(11) Bedæ Epist. ad Egbertum, p. 309, 310,

(12) Historia Ramfienf. p. 397.

(13) Hickesii Dissertat. Epist. p. 77.

men to monasteries, was represented by the monks as contributing greatly to the future repose of the souls of those who gave it, and of their friends; from whence it became a common practice for all men who had any sense of religion or concern for their salvation, to bequeath a share of their estates at least to their own souls, as it was called when they gave it to a church or monastery (14). King Æthelwulf (says Asserius), like a wise man, made his testament in writing, and divided his estate between his soul and his children: what he gave to his children I need not mention; what he gave to his own soul was as follows,' &c. &c. The monks were at great pains to persuade rich men to become monks themselves, or to make some of their children monks, by which they gained great accessions both of wealth and credit; for when they got possession of their persons, they were certain of their estates. When they could not prevail with great men to abandon the world during life, they persuaded them, that it would be of great benefit to their souls to have their bodies buried in a monastery near the relics of some famous saint; a privilege which could not be procured but for a very valuable consideration (15). It was also a common practice in those times, for monasteries to grant to some great man one of their estates during his own life, upon condition that it should revert to the monastery at his death, accompanied by such another estate of his family for the good of his soul. Thus did they circumvent, by applying to their covetousness, those whom they could not delude by other means (16). In a word, there were very few in those times who had either any hopes of heaven or fears of hell, who did not leave a share of their wealth to some church or monastery. So insatiably covetous were the English clergy of this period, that they were not ashamed to boast of the most infamous impositions on the unhappy laity, as pious and meritorious actions, when they contributed to enrich the church. What extravagant praises are bestowed by the monkish writers on Ætheric, bishop of Dorchester, in the reign of king Canute, for his dexterous management, in making a Danish nobleman drunk, and buying a fine estate from

(14) Asser. Vita Ælfredi. p. 4.

(15) Histor. Ramfien. p. 460. Hist. Eriens. p. 470.

(16) Hist. Eriens. p. 453.

him for a mere trifle when he was in that condition; because the holy bishop (who deserved to have been severely punished for his knavery) granted that estate to the abbey of Ramsey (17)? By these, and various other means, such torrents of wealth flowed into the church in the course of this period, that before the end of it, the clergy were in possession of much more than one third of the lands of England, besides the tithes of the whole; and of great wealth in money, plate, and moveables of all kinds.

The Anglo-Saxons in this period placed much of their <sup>Fond of</sup> religion in performing pilgrimages to Jerusalem, Rome, <sup>pilgrim-</sup> and other places, both at home and abroad, that had obtained the reputation of extraordinary sanctity. These pilgrimages, especially to Rome, were enjoined upon sinners as the most satisfactory penances for the greatest crimes, and recommended to saints as the most acceptable services to God. Few pious persons of any rank in those times could die in peace, or think themselves sure of heaven, till they had kissed the pope's toe, and visited the pretended sepulchres of St. Peter and St. Paul at Rome. 'I had been told (says Canute the Great), that the apostle Peter had received great authority from the Lord, and carried the keys of heaven; and therefore I thought it absolutely necessary to secure his favour by a pilgrimage to Rome (18).' For such reasons, kings, queens, nobles, prelates, monks, nuns, saints, and sinners, wise men, and fools, were impatient to undertake these religious journies; and all the roads between Rome and England were constantly crowded with English pilgrims. It appears indeed, that the morals of these superstitious vagabonds, especially of the ladies, were not much improved by these peregrinations. Boniface, archbishop of Mentz, an Englishman, in a letter which he wrote to Cuthbert archbishop of Canterbury, A. D. 745, exhorts him,—'to prevent such great numbers of English nuns from going on pilgrimages to Rome; because so many of them lose their virtue before they return, that there is hardly a city or town in Lombardy, France, or Gaul, in which there are not some English women who live by prostitution, to

(17) Hist. Elienf. p. 441.

(18) Spelman. Concil. Britan. t. i. p. 535.

‘ the great reproach of your church (19).’ It is not improbable, that these ladies, being certain of a plenary remission of all their sins when they arrived at their journey’s end, might think there could be no great harm in adding a little to the number of them by the way.

Great veneration for saints and relics.

An excessive veneration for saints and relics was another remarkable circumstance in the religious principles and practices of the English of this period. William of Malmesbury represents it as the peculiar glory of England in the Anglo-Saxon times, that it abounded more in saints and relics than any other country. ‘ What shall I say of all our holy bishops, hermits, and abbots? Is not this whole country so glorious and refulgent with relics, that you can hardly enter a village of any note, without hearing of some new saint, though the names of many of our English saints have perished for want of writings (20)?’ There never was a time in which honours and riches were so much admired and coveted, as old rags, rotten bones, and rusty nails, &c. were admired and coveted by the religious of this period. These were sent by the greatest princes to each other as the most valuable presents, preserved by churches and monasteries as their most inestimable treasures, deposited in caskets adorned with gold and precious stones, and were never viewed without being adored. ‘ At the death of abbot Turketul (says Ingulphus), A. D. 975, the abbey of Croiland was very rich in relics, which that holy abbot had received from Henry emperor of Germany, Hugh king of France, Louis prince of Aquitaine, and many other dukes, earls, nobles, and prelates, when he was chancellor of England. Among these he had the greatest veneration for a thumb of the apostle St. Bartholomew, which he constantly carried about him, and with which he signed himself in all times of dangers, tempests, and thunders. This most precious relic had been presented to the emperor by the duke of Beneventum when he knighted him, and by the emperor to Turketul while he was chancellor. He had also a lock of the hairs of Mary the mother of God, which the king of France had given him inclosed in a box of gold; and a bone of St. Leodegarius the bishop and

(19) Spelman Concil. Britan. t. i. p. 241.

(20) W. Malmf. p. 57.



‘ martyr, which he had received from the prince of Aquitain (21).’ So great was the rage for relics in this period, especially among the clergy, that they made no scruple of being guilty of theft, robbery, or almost any crime, to get them into their possession; and when a monk had the dexterity to steal the little finger of some famous saint from another monastery, he was esteemed the greatest and happiest of men among his brethren (22). If real relics could not be procured, false ones were substituted in their room, and exposed as objects of veneration to the deluded multitudes, without remorse or shame. Still further to increase their veneration for this kind of trumpery, a thousand improbable tales of miracles performed by relics were invented by the monks, and swallowed by the people without the least examination (23).

The public worship of the Anglo-Saxons, and of several other nations in this period, consisted chiefly in psalmody; in which both the clergy and laity took much delight. In some cathedrals and larger monasteries, this exercise was continued both night and day without intermission, by a constant succession of priests and singers, with whom the laity occasionally joined (24). ‘ Both the ears and minds (says an excellent antiquary) of the people of all ranks were so much charmed with this incessant melody of the monks, that it contributed not a little to increase their zeal and liberality in building monasteries.’ This taste for psalmody very much increased after the introduction of organs into churches in the course of the ninth century: ‘ whose pipes of copper (to use the words of a writer of that age) being winded by bellows, and furnished with proper stops and keys, sent forth a most loud and ravishing music, that was heard at a great distance (25).’ Even the private devotions of the good people of those times consisted almost entirely in singing a prodigious number of psalms; which was esteemed the most effectual means of appeasing the wrath of Heaven, and making an atonement for their own sins, or the sins of their friends, either living or dead. It was commonly an article in those voluntary associations called *gilds* or *fraternities*, so frequent among the Anglo-Saxons, ‘ that each member

Fondness  
for psalm-  
ody.

(21) Ingulphi Hist. p. 505.

(22) Anglia Sacra, t. 2. p. 39.

(23) Murator. Antiq. Dissertat. 58.

(24) Id. Dissert. 56. t. 4. p. 772.

(25) Hist. Ramsien. p. 420.

‘ should sing two psalms every day, one for all the members of the fraternity that were living, and the other for all that had been members, but were dead; and that at the death of a member, each of the surviving members should sing psalms for the repose of his soul (26).’ All kinds of penances might be redeemed by singing a sufficient number of psalms and *pater-nosters*. For example, if a penitent was condemned to fast a certain number of days, he might redeem as many of them as he pleased, at the rate of singing six *pater-nosters*, and the 119th psalms six times over, for one day’s fast (27). In a word, psalm-singing was a kind of spiritual cash in those times, and answered the same purposes in religion that money did in trade.

Not necessary to make this enumeration more complete.

There were many other particulars both in the religious principles and practices of the Anglo-Saxons, which would appear very singular to their posterity in the present age, though they were common to them with all the other nations of Europe in those times of ignorance and superstition. But there doth not seem to be any necessity for making this enumeration more complete. We have seen enough to convince us of the religious dispositions of our ancestors, and their sincere desires of recommending themselves to the divine favour; and to make us lament, that the means which they were taught to employ for that purpose were not more agreeable to right reason and genuine revelation.

Their love of liberty.

After the account that hath been given of the Anglo-Saxon constitution in a former chapter, it is hardly necessary to observe, that the love of political liberty, and of a free and legal form of government, may be justly reckoned among the national virtues of the English in this period. This virtue, together with the great and leading principles of their constitution, they derived from their ancestors, the ancient Germans, who are greatly celebrated by the Greek and Roman writers for their love of liberty, and their brave defence of that inestimable blessing (28). Those armies of adventurers which arrived from Germany in quest of settlements in this island, in the fifth and sixth centuries, were composed of high-spirited and haughty warriors, who were

(26) Hickesii Dissertat. Epist. p. 22.

(27) Johnson’s Canons, A. D. 963.

(28) Pelloutier, l. 2. c. 14.

almost equals, and would admit of no greater degrees of subordination than they chose themselves, and thought necessary to the success of their enterprises. Their conquests, we may be certain, did not abate their haughtiness, or make them more submissive to their leaders. For their own honour, after their settlement, they allowed those leaders to assume the name of kings, and gave them a large proportion of the conquered lands to support their dignity; but they still retained in their own hands the power of making laws, imposing taxes, and determining all national questions of importance, in their national assemblies, as their ancestors had done in their native seats on the continent (29). Of these inestimable privileges they continued to be infinitely jealous, and to defend them with the most undaunted resolution; and it is to this political jealousy and resolution of our remote ancestors, that we are indebted for our present free and legal form of government.

Martial valour was the peculiar boast and distinguishing characteristic of the ancient nations of Germany and Scandinavia. The genuine spirit and sentiments of all these nations are expressed with much energy in the following words of one of their chieftains: ‘Valour is the most glorious attribute of man, which endears him to the gods, who never forsake the valiant (30).’ It was this undaunted, or rather frantic valour, that enabled the northern nations to resist the Roman arms, and at length to overturn the Roman empire. Nor were any of those nations (except the Scandinavians, who were the scourge of all the countries of Europe for several centuries) more renowned for valour than the Saxons. It was the fame of their valour that engaged the unhappy Britons to apply to the Saxons for their protection against the Scots and Picts. This appears from the following expressions in the speech of their ambassadors: ‘Most noble Saxons, the wretched and miserable Britons, worn out by the perpetual incursions of their enemies, having heard of the many glorious victories which you have obtained by your valour, have sent us, their humble suppliants, to implore your assistance and protection.—Formerly we lived in peace and safety under the protection of the

Their valour.

(29) Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 7. 11, 12.

(30) Tacit. Hist. l. 4. c. 17.

‘ Romans; and next to them, knowing none more  
 ‘ brave and powerful than you, we fly for refuge under  
 ‘ the wings of your valour (31).’ The Britons were  
 not mistaken in their high opinion of the valour and  
 martial spirit of the Saxons; who thereby not only re-  
 pulsed the Scots and Picts, which were fierce and war-  
 like nations, but also subdued the Britons themselves,  
 who called them to their protection.

Valour of  
 the Anglo-  
 Saxons di-  
 minished.

It must, however, be confessed, that the Anglo-Saxons  
 did not retain this part of their national character in its  
 full vigour through the whole of this period. For after  
 they had been some time peaceably settled in England,  
 had embraced the Christian religion in that corrupted  
 form in which it was presented to them, and many of  
 them had contracted a fondness for the monastic life,  
 they lost much of their former martial spirit, and became  
 rather a timid than a warlike people. Venerable Bede,  
 though he was a monk himself, and a most religious  
 man, beheld this change in the national character of his  
 countrymen with deep concern, and foretold the fatal  
 consequences with which it would be attended. He  
 called the rage of building monasteries, and embracing  
 the monastic life, which began to prevail in his time, a  
 most pernicious madness, which deprived the country  
 both of soldiers and commanders to defend it from the  
 invasions of its enemies (32). William of Malmesbury  
 also takes notice of this change in the national character  
 of the Anglo-Saxons: ‘ The manners of the English  
 ‘ have been different in different periods. At their ar-  
 ‘ rival in Britain, they were a fierce, bold, and warlike  
 ‘ people; but after they had embraced the Christian re-  
 ‘ ligion, they became by degrees more peaceful in their  
 ‘ dispositions; devotion was then their greatest national  
 ‘ virtue, and valour possessed only the second place in  
 ‘ their esteem (33).’ It was this great diminution of the  
 martial spirit of the English that made them suffer so  
 much from the depredations of the Danes. The dif-  
 ference in this respect between these two nations at  
 length became so great, that the English fled before infe-  
 rior numbers of the Danes, and could hardly be prevail-  
 ed upon to meet them in the field of battle on any terms.

(31) See vol. I.

(32) Bede Epist. ad Egbertum.

(33) W. Malmf. p. 57.



‘ How long is it (says an English author in the reign of  
 ‘ king Ethelred the Unready) since the English obtained  
 ‘ a victory over their enemies? ‘ The pirates are now  
 ‘ become so bold and fearless, that one of them some-  
 ‘ times puts ten, sometimes more, sometimes fewer, of  
 ‘ us to flight. O the misery and worldly shame in which  
 ‘ England is involved through the wrath of God! How  
 ‘ often doth two or three troops of Danes drive the whole  
 ‘ English army before them from sea to sea, to our eternal  
 ‘ infamy, if we were capable of feeling shame! But,  
 ‘ alas! so abject are we become, that we worship those  
 ‘ who trample upon us, and load us with indignities (34).’

In this last expression, the reverend bishop (for such this writer was) had probably in his eye that remarkable instance of the abject submission of the English to the insolence of the Danes, which is mentioned by other authors,—‘ That when an Englishman met a Dane on a  
 ‘ bridge, or in a narrow path, where he could not avoid  
 ‘ him, he was obliged to stand still, with his head uncovered, and in a bowing posture, as soon as the Dane  
 ‘ appeared, and to remain in that posture till he was out  
 ‘ of sight (35).’ Nay, the bishop himself, in this very sermon, gives an example of the brutal insolence of the Danes, and of the spiritless submission of the English, which is too indelicate and shocking to be here inserted (36). The truth is, that nothing can be more difficult than to keep a sufficient portion of gallant and martial spirit alive in a people softened by long tranquillity, and keenly engaged in peaceful pursuits of any kind: nor can any thing be more dangerous than to suffer that spirit to be extinguished. To this both the ancient Britons and the Anglo-Saxons owed all their miseries and disgraces.

The Danes, who constituted so great a proportion of the inhabitants, and were for some time the predominant people of England in this period, were of as bold, fearless, and intrepid a spirit, as the Saxons had ever been, and rather more fierce and warlike. The histo-

(34) Hicessii Dissertat. Epistol. p. 103.

(35) Pontopidan. Gesta et Vestigia Danorum extra Daniam, t. 2. p. 139.

(36) Saperumero decem aut duodecem Dani alternis vicibus uxorem, vel filiam, vel cognatam thayni vitant, ipso thayno spectante, nec prohibente. *Sermo Lupi Episcopi, apud Ickessii Thesaur. t. 1. p. 103.*

ries of almost all the other nations of Europe, as well as of the English, in the eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries, contain the most ample evidences of this fact. In that period the people of Scandinavia, comprehending the kingdoms of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, breathed nothing but war, and were animated with a most astonishing spirit of enterprise and adventure. By their numerous fleets, they rode triumphant in all the European seas, and carried terror and desolation to the coasts of Germany, France, Spain, Italy, England, Scotland, and Ireland, to say nothing of the East, into which they also penetrated (37). The inhabitants of all these countries, especially of the sea-coasts, lived in continual apprehensions of those dreadful enemies; and it made a part of their daily prayers to be preserved by Providence from their destructive visits (38).

Causes of  
the martial  
spirit of  
the Danes.

Many things contributed to kindle this love, or rather rage, for war and martial achievements, in the bosoms of the Scandinavians, in this period. They were Pagans; and those who were the objects of their worship had been famous warriors, whose favour, they imagined, could only be obtained by brave exploits in war. Their admission into the hall of Odin (the father of slaughter, the god of fire and desolation), and all their future happiness, they were taught to believe, depended on the violence of their own death, and on the number of their enemies which they had slain in battle (39). This belief inspired them with a contempt of life, a fondness for a violent death, and a thirst for blood, which are happily unknown, and appear incredible in the present times (40). Their education was no less martial in its spirit and tendency than their religion. Many of them were born in fleets or camps; and the first objects on which they fixed their eyes were arms, storms, battles, blood, and slaughter. Nursed and brought up in the midst of these

(37) Pontepidani *Gesta et Vestigia Danorum extra Daniam* 3 tom. 8vo. Laphæ et Hafniæ, A. D. 1741

(38) It was a petition in the Litany of those times,—‘A furore mannorum libera nos, Domine.’

(39) Northern Antiq. t. i. c. 6.

(40) ——— Certe populi, quos despicit Arctos,

Felices errore suo! quos ille, timorum

Maximus, haud urget lethi metus: inde ruendi

In ferrum mens prona viris, animæque capaces

Mortis, et ignavum reditura pacere vitæ. *Lucan, l. i.*

terrible objects, they by degrees became familiar, and at length delightful. Their childhood and their dawn of youth were wholly spent in running, leaping, climbing, swimming, wrestling, boxing, fighting, and such exercises as hardened both their souls and bodies, and disposed and fitted them for the toils of war. As soon as they began to lisp, they were taught to sing the exploits and victories of their ancestors; their memories were stored with nothing but tales of warlike and piratical expeditions, of defeating their enemies, burning cities, plundering provinces, and of the wealth and glory acquired by brave exploits. With such an education, it was no wonder that their youthful hearts soon began to beat high with martial ardour; and that they early became impatient to grasp the sword and spear, and to mingle with their fathers, brothers, and companions, in the bloody conflict. This they also knew was the only road to riches, honours, the smiles of the fair, and every thing that was desirable. To all these motives to martial and piratical expeditions, arising from religion and education, another, still more powerful, if possible, was added. This was necessity, occasioned by the barren uncultivated state of their country; which obliged them to seek for those provisions by piracy and plunder abroad, which they could not find at home. The situation of their country also, consisting of islands, and of a great extent of sea-coast on the continent, naturally led them to the study of maritime affairs, which have a direct tendency to make men hardy and courageous, familiar with toils and dangers. All these motives co-operating (which perhaps may never be again united), rendered the Danes of the middle ages a most fearless, undaunted, and warlike people, and gave their courage some remarkable properties, which merit a little of our attention.

The valour of the Danes was boastful and audacious, attended with much presumption and self-confidence. This appeared by a degree of boldness and daring in their words and actions which to other nations would have seemed the greatest rashness. It was one of their martial laws,—‘ That a Dane who wished to acquire the character of a brave man, should always attack two enemies, stand firm and receive the attack of three, retire only one pace from four, and fly from no fewer than

Properties  
of the  
martial  
spirit of  
the Danes.

‘ than five (41).’ The histories of those times are full of examples of the most bold, desperate, and often successful, darings of the Danes; of which none is better attested, or more extraordinary, than the following one, which is related by many of our own writers. A bloody and obstinate battle was fought near Stamford, 24th October A. D. 1066, between Harold king of England and Harald Harefager king of Norway, in which the Norwegians were at length obliged to retire, and the English began to pursue with great eagerness. But a total stop was put to their pursuit for several hours by the desperate boldness of a single man. This was a Dane of a gigantic stature, enormous strength, and undaunted courage; who, taking his station on Stamford bridge, killed no fewer than forty of the pursuers with his battle-axe, and was not killed at last but by a stratagem (42). This high presumptuous spirit of the Danes made them violent, vindictive, and impatient of the least affront, or (in modern language) men of strict and jealous honour. To call a Dane a *nothing*, was like setting fire to gunpowder, and instantly excited such a flame of rage, as nothing but his own blood, or the blood of the offender, could extinguish (43). By this means duels and single combats were as frequent and bloody, and fought on almost as trifling occasions, among the barbarous and Pagan Danes, as they are among the politest Christians of the present age. It was the same spirit that rendered the Danes of this period intolerably haughty and insolent to those whom they had subdued, and made them exact the most humiliating tokens of submission from them. Some examples of the insolence of the Danes to the English, while they were under their dominion, have been already given; to which several others might be added; but the following one will be sufficient to convince the reader, that it was carried to the most capricious height. If an Englishman presumed to drink in the presence of a Dane, without his express permission, it was esteemed so great a mark of disrespect, that nothing but his instant death could expiate. Nay, the English were so intimidated, that they would not adventure to drink even when they were invited, until the Danes had pledged their honour

(41) Bartholin. *Causæ Contemptæ a Danis Mortis*, c. 7.

(42) W. M. mss. in Harod. Prompton, p. 958.

(43) Bartholin. c. 7. Northern Antiq. c. 9.



for their safety; which introduced the custom of pledging each other in drinking; of which some vestiges are still remaining among the common people in the north of England, where the Danes were most predominant (44). This insolence of the Danes made so deep an impression on the imaginations of the English, and was painted by them to their posterity in such lively colours, that for several ages a proud imperious tyrant was called a *Lord-Dane* (45).

The martial spirit of the Pagan Danes was attended with a most prodigious prodigality of life, and fondness for a violent death. The many strange accounts that are given of this in their ancient histories, would appear incredible, if they were not so well attested. On receiving mortal wounds in battle, they were so far from uttering groans and lamentations, or exhibiting any marks of fear or sorrow, that they commonly began to laugh and sing (46). These expressions of joy at the approach of a violent death, which were sincere and unaffected, proceeded from the native and acquired boldness of their ferocious spirits,—from their ardent love of military fame,—and from the thoughts of those endless scenes of fighting, feasting, and carousing, which they expected in the hall of Odin (47). The surviving friends of those who fell in battle, after having fought bravely, and killed a number of their enemies, were so far from bewailing their fate, that they rejoiced in their death, as an event equally happy to themselves and honourable to their family. The famous Siward, a Danish earl of Northumberland, being told that his favourite son was killed in a battle against the Scots, asked, with much anxiety, whether his wounds were behind or before? and being answered, that they were all before, he cried out, in a transport of joy,—‘Now I am perfectly happy! that was a death worthy of me and my son (48).’ Those Danish warriors who had courted a violent death in many battles, and had been so unfortunate as not to find it, became unhappy and discontented at the approach of old age, full of the most dreadful apprehensions that they should die of some disease, and thereby be excluded from the society of heroes, and the hall of Odin. To prevent

(44) Pontopidan. *Gesta et Vestigia Danorum*, t. 2. p. 209.

(45) Fabian Chron. c. 198.

(46) Bartholin, c. 1, 2.

(47) *Id. ibid.* l. 2. c. 11.

(48) Hen. Hunt. l. 6. c. 24.

this, they either persuaded some of their friends to dispatch them, or put a violent end to their own lives (49). Starcather, a celebrated Danish captain, who had spent his whole life in arms and combats, was so unfortunate as not to meet with any person who had strength and courage enough to beat out his brains. As soon as he observed his sight begin to fail, he became very disconsolate, and apprehensive that he should be so unhappy as to die in his bed. To avoid so great a calamity, he put a gold chain of considerable value about his neck, which he declared he would bestow upon the first brave man he could meet with, who would do him the favour to cut off his head: nor was it long before he met with one who did him that friendly office, and won his chain (50). Even after the Danes embraced the Christian religion, and were thereby deprived of the religious motives to prefer a violent death, their warriors continued for some time to esteem that the most remarkable kind of exit, and to abhor the thoughts of dying of lingering diseases, and in their beds. Earl Siward, already mentioned (who was as good a Christian as any Dane could be, who had spent his whole life in scenes of slaughter), being seized with a dysentery in his old age, and sensible that his end was drawing near, felt much uneasiness about the manner of his death, of which he was quite ashamed: ‘Alas! (said he,) that I have escaped death in so many battles, to yield up my life in this tame disgraceful manner, like a cow! I beseech you, my dear friends, dress me in my impenetrable coat of mail, gird my trusty sword about my body, place my helmet on my head, my shield in my left hand, and my gilded battle-axe in my right, that I may die in the dress at least of a warrior, since I cannot have the happiness to die in battle.’ All this was done, and he expired with some degree of honour and satisfaction (51). Christianity, however, by degrees, abated this unnatural furious spirit of the Danes, made them less prodigal of life, and less fond of a violent death, to their own advantage, and the repose of the rest of mankind.

Fondness  
for piratical  
expeditions.

The martial spirit of the Pagan Danes exerted and spent itself chiefly in piratical expeditions; to which they were exceedingly and universally addicted. This was owing

(49) Bartholin. l. 1. c. 4.

(51) Id. *ibid.*

(50) Id. *ibid.*

Hen. Hunt. l. 6. c. 26.

to the situation of their country, and the ordinary progress of society from the pastoral to the predatory life. For nations are first hunters, then shepherds; and when their numbers are too much increased to live by these employments, they next become robbers or pirates for some time, before they commence husbandmen and manufacturers. Thus much at least is certain, that the Danes were so universally a people of pirates, in the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries, that a Dane and a pirate were synonymous terms in the languages of several nations, and particularly in that of the Anglo-Saxons (52). In those times all the men of Denmark constantly wore the dress of sailors; and there were sometimes greater numbers of Danes actually at sea than on shore (53). All these were engaged in piracy; which was pursued, not only by persons of inferior rank, but by kings, princes, and nobles, as the most honourable of all professions (54). Some of these pirates acquired so much wealth and fame, and had such numerous fleets at their command, that they were called *sea-kings*; and though they were not masters of one foot of land, made the greatest nations and most powerful monarchs tremble (55). ‘ Helghi (says an ancient historian) was a hero of invincible strength and valour, and spent his whole life in piracy. He plundered and depopulated the coasts of all the surrounding countries, by his fleets, and justly acquired the honourable title of a *sea-king* (56).’ The introduction of Christianity by degrees abated the violence, and at length abolished the practice, of piracy among the Danes, both of England and Scandinavia: for both the laws and actions of the Christian pirates of this period were humane and gentle, in comparison of those of their Pagan predecessors (57).

The most pernicious property of the martial spirit of the Pagan Danes was its cruelty; which prompted them to many deeds of horror, and made them the dread and detestation of other nations. These cruelties of the Danes are painted in the strongest colours by our most ancient historians, who lived in or nearest to those times. ‘ The cruel Guthrum (says one of these historians) arrived in England A. D. 878, at the head of an army

(52) Chron. Saxon. passim. (53) Northern Antiquit. t. 1. c. 10.

(54) Id. ibid. (55) Bartholin. l. 2. c. 9.

(56) Sueno Agonis Hist. Den. c. 1. (57) Bartholin. l. 2. c. 9.

‘ of

‘ of Pagan Danes, no less cruel than himself, who, like  
 ‘ inhuman savages, destroyed all before them with fire  
 ‘ and sword, involving cities, towns, and villages, with  
 ‘ their inhabitants, in devouring flames; and cutting  
 ‘ those in pieces with their battle-axes who attempted to  
 ‘ escape from their burning houses. The tears, cries,  
 ‘ and lamentations of men, women, and children, made  
 ‘ no impressions on their unrelenting hearts; even the  
 ‘ most tempting bribes, and the humblest offers of be-  
 ‘ coming their slaves, had no effect. All the towns  
 ‘ through which they passed exhibited the most deplora-  
 ‘ ble scenes of misery and desolation; as, venera-  
 ‘ ble old men lying with their throats cut before their  
 ‘ own doors; the streets covered with the bodies of  
 ‘ young men and children, without heads, legs, or  
 ‘ arms; and of matrons and virgins, who had been first  
 ‘ publicly dishonoured, and then put to death (58).’  
 It is said to have been a common pastime among these  
 barbarians, to tear the infants of the English from the  
 breasts of their mothers, toss them up into the air, and  
 catch them on the points of their spears as they were fall-  
 ing down (59). One Oliver, a famous pirate of those  
 times, was much celebrated for his humanity, and acquir-  
 ed the surname of *Barnakall*, or *child-preserver*; because  
 he denied his followers this diversion of tossing infants on  
 their spears (60). Even after the Danes and Anglo-Sax-  
 ons had embraced the Christian religion, they long re-  
 tained too great a tincture of their former ferocity. It is  
 a sufficient proof of this, that the horrid operation of  
 scalping, esteemed cruel in the savages of North Amer-  
 ica, was occasionally performed by these nations on their  
 enemies towards the end of this period. ‘ Earl Godwin  
 ‘ (says an ancient historian) intercepted prince Alfred,  
 ‘ the brother of Edward the Confessor, at Gillingham, in  
 ‘ his way to London, seized his person, and defeated his  
 ‘ guards; some of which he imprisoned, some he sold  
 ‘ for slaves, some he blinded by pulling out their eyes,  
 ‘ some he maimed by cutting off their hands and feet,  
 ‘ some he tortured by pulling off the skin of their heads,  
 ‘ and by various torments put about six hundred men to  
 ‘ death (61).’

(58) J. Walsingham, apud Gale, t. 1. p. 536.

(59) Anglia Sacra, t. 2. p. 115.

(60) Barlham, t. 2. c. 9. p. 457.

(61) Hist. Elment. apud Gale, l. 2. c. 32.



The Anglo-Saxons and Danes were of a social disposition, and delighted much in forming themselves into fraternities and gilds of various kinds, which were cemented by frequent convivial meetings and computations. By the laws of the Anglo-Saxons, every freeman who was the head of a family was obliged to be a member of the decenary or neighbourhood in which he dwelt; and all the members of the neighbourhood were pledges for each others good behaviour to the public. This created a connection between them, and gave them an interest in each others concerns, quite unknown in the present times; and these ties of union were greatly strengthened by their eating and drinking together at the common table of the neighbourhood (62). Besides those legal societies, many voluntary ones were formed between persons of similar tempers, inclinations, and ways of life, for their mutual safety, comfort, and advantage. Some of these voluntary fraternities or *sodalities* were composed of ecclesiastics, and some of laymen, and some of both clergy and laity; and the statutes of all these different kinds are still extant, and have been published (63). From these statutes, especially of the lay fraternities, it appears, that one great object of them was, to promote good fellowship and frequent festive meetings among their members; for the forfeitures are generally appointed to be paid in honey and malt, to be made into mead and ale for the entertainment of the fraternity (64). These convivial assemblies, in which the Anglo-Saxons and Danes delighted so much, were productive of some good effects, and contributed to strengthen the ties of friendship, and restrain their natural ferocity within some decent bounds; very severe fines being imposed on those who were guilty of giving offensive language to any member of the fraternity at the common table, or neglected to perform any of those friendly offices which were required by their statutes (65). On the other hand, it cannot be denied, that the frequent festive meetings of these fraternities contributed very much to increase their vicious habits of excessive drinking, to which they were too much addicted. The very laws that were made by some of these frater-

Social disposition of the Anglo-Saxons and Danes.

(62) Johnson's Canons, A. D. 693. c. 5.

(63) Hicessii Epist. Dissertat. p. 20, 21, 22.

(65) Id. ibid. Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 16.

(64) Id. ibid.

nities to restrain excesses of this kind, are a sufficient proof that they were allowed to go considerable lengths in this way, without incurring any blame; for these laws were made only against such shameful degrees of intoxication as are not to be named (66).

Credulity  
of the An-  
glo-Sax-  
ons and  
Danes.

Both the Anglo-Saxons and Danes, and all the other nations of Europe in this dark period, were credulous to a degree that is quite astonishing. This is evident from every remaining monument of their history. What prodigious numbers of miracles do we meet with in every monkish chronicle; and how ridiculous are many of these miracles! The following one, which is related with much solemnity as a most unquestionable fact, by William of Malmesbury, the most sensible of our ancient historians, may serve as a specimen of these monkish miracles, though others still more ridiculous might be produced. This miracle Malmesbury relates in the following manner, in the very words, as he says, of one of the persons on whom it was wrought: ‘I Ethelbert, a  
‘ sinner, will give a true relation of what happened to  
‘ me on the day before Christmas, A. D. 1012, in a  
‘ certain village where there was a church dedicated to  
‘ St. Magnus the martyr, that all men may know the  
‘ danger of disobeying the commands of a priest. Fifteen  
‘ young women, and eighteen young men, of which I  
‘ was one, were dancing and singing in the church-  
‘ yard, when one Robert, a priest, was performing  
‘ mass in the church; who sent us a civil message, in-  
‘ treating us to desist from our diversion, because we  
‘ disturbed his devotion by our noise. But we impious-  
‘ ly disregarded his request; upon which the holy man,  
‘ inflamed with anger, prayed to God and St. Magnus,  
‘ that we might continue dancing and singing a whole  
‘ year without intermission. His prayers were heard.  
‘ A young man, the son of a priest, named John, took  
‘ his sister, who was singing with us, by the hand, and  
‘ her arm dropped from her body without one drop of  
‘ blood following. But notwithstanding this disaster,  
‘ she continued to dance and sing with us a whole year.  
‘ During all that time we felt no inconveniency from  
‘ rain, cold, heat, hunger, thirst, or weariness, and nei-  
‘ ther our shoes nor our clothes wore out. Whenever

(66) Bartholin. de Causis Contemptæ apud Danos Mortis, c. 8.

‘ it began to rain, a magnificent house was erected over us by the power of the Almighty. By our continual dancing we wore the earth so much, that by degrees we sunk into it up to the knees, and at length up to the middle. When the year was ended, bishop Hubert came to the place, dissolved the invisible ties by which our hands had been so long united, absolved us, and reconciled us to St. Magnus. The priest’s daughter, who had lost her arm, and other two of the young women died away immediately; but all the rest fell into a profound sleep, in which they continued three days and three nights; after which they arose, and went up and down the world, publishing this true and glorious miracle, and carrying the evidences of its truth along with them, in the continual shaking of their limbs (67).’ A formal deed, relating the particulars, and attesting the truth of this ridiculous story, was drawn up and subscribed by bishop Peregrine, the successor of Hubert, A. D. 1013; and we may be certain, that a fact so well attested was universally believed. Many of the monkish miracles in this period were as trifling as they were ridiculous, and pretended to be wrought for the most frivolous purposes. As the famous St. Dunstan was one day celebrating mass, a dove came down from heaven, and hovered over his head; which so much engaged the attention of all the people and clergy, that none of them had the presence of mind to assist the saint in putting off his pontifical robes when mass was ended. He therefore put them off himself; but instead of falling to the ground, they hung suspended in the air, that the pious meditations of the holy man might not be disturbed by their noise in falling (68). Not a few of the miracles that were published by the monks, and believed by the people, of this period, were of the most pernicious and hurtful nature; especially those that were wrought by the Welsh saints, who were represented as more touchy and passionate than any other saints, even after they were in heaven (69). Many other evidences might be produced, if it were necessary, of the extreme credulity of the people of England, and of all the other countries of Eu-

(67) W. Malmf. p. 38. l. 2. c. 10.

(68) Anglia Sacra, t. 2. p. 77.

(69) Girald. Cambrenf. Itinerar. Cambriæ, l. 2. c. 7.

rope, besides this of believing the most absurd tales of ridiculous, frivolous, and pernicious miracles; for they received with equal readiness the no less monstrous relations of the monks concerning visions, ghosts, revelations, and enchantments. In a word, it seems to have been impossible for the priests of this period to invent any thing that the people would not believe upon their word.

Curiosity  
of the An-  
glo-Sax-  
ons and  
Danes.

The Anglo-Saxons and Danes were as curious as they were credulous, and were at much expence and pains to penetrate into futurity, to discover what was to befall them, and what would be the issue of their various undertakings. This made them the dupes of those wretches who pretended to be skilful in the arts of fortune-telling and divination, who were courted, caressed, and rewarded, by the greatest princes, as well as by the common people. These admired magicians and fortune-tellers were commonly old women; for whom the Anglo-Saxons, as well as their ancestors the ancient Germans, entertained a very great veneration, and in whom they imagined something divine resided (70). As the Danes were more ignorant, and continued longer Pagans than the English; so they were still greater dupes to those wrinkled dispensers of good and bad fortune, who travelled with the retinue and state of queens, and were every where treated with the highest respect. One of them is thus described in an ancient Danish history: ‘ There was a  
‘ certain old woman named *Hilda*, who was famous for  
‘ her skill in divination and the arts of magic, who fre-  
‘ quented public entertainments, predicting what kind  
‘ of weather would be the year after, and telling men and  
‘ women their fortunes. She was constantly attended  
‘ by thirty men servants, and waited upon by fifteen  
‘ young maidens (71).’ Princes and great men, when they invited these venerable hags to their houses, to consult them about the success of their designs, the fortunes of themselves and children, or any future event which they desired to know, made great preparations for their honourable reception, and entertained them in the most respectful manner. This and several other curious particulars, relating to the manners of those times, appear from the following genuine description of one of these in-

(70) Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 8.

(71) Bartholin. I. 3. c. 4. p. 683.



terviews. ' There was in the same country an old woman named *Thorbiorga*, the only survivor of nine sisters, fortune-tellers, who was very famous for her knowledge of futurity, and frequented public entertainments for the exercise of her art when she was invited. Earl Thorchill, who had the greatest authority in that country, and was most desirous to know when the famine and sickness, which then raged, would come to an end, sent messengers to invite *Thorbiorga* to his house, after he had made all the preparations which were usual for the reception of such an honourable guest. In particular, a seat was prepared for the prophetess, raised some steps above the other seats, and covered with a cushion stuffed with hens feathers. When she arrived on an evening, conducted by the messengers, she was dressed in a gown of green cloth, buttoned from top to bottom; had a string of glass beads about her neck, and her head covered with the skin of a black lamb, lined with the skin of a white cat: her shoes were made of a calf's skin, with the hair on it, tied with thongs, and fastened with brass buttons: on her hands she had a pair of gloves of a white cat's skin, with the fur inward: about her waist she wore a Hunlandic girdle, at which hung a bag, containing her magical instruments; and she supported her feeble limbs by leaning on a staff adorned with many knobs of brass. As soon as she entered the hall, the whole company arose, as it became them, and saluted her in the most respectful manner; which she returned as she thought proper. Earl Thorchill then advanced, and taking her by the hand, conducted her to the seat prepared for her. After some time spent in conversation, a table was set before her covered with many dishes; but she eat only of a pottage of goat's milk, and of a dish which consisted of the hearts of various animals. When the table was removed, Thorchill humbly approached the prophetess, and asked her what she thought of his house, and of his family; and when she would be pleased to tell them what they desired to know. To this she replied, that she would tell them nothing that evening, but would satisfy them fully next day. Accordingly on the day after, when she had put her implements of divination in proper order, she commanded a maiden, named *Godreda*, to sing the magical song

‘ called *Vardlokur*; which she did with so clear and  
 ‘ sweet a voice, that the whole company were ravished  
 ‘ with her music, and none so much as the prophets;  
 ‘ who cried out, Now I know many things concerning  
 ‘ this famine and sickness which I did not know before.  
 ‘ This famine will be of short continuance, and plenty  
 ‘ will return with the next season, which will be favour-  
 ‘ able; and the sickness also will shortly fly away. As  
 ‘ for you, my lovely maid Godreda, you shall be mar-  
 ‘ ried to a nobleman of the highest rank, and become  
 ‘ the happy mother of a numerous and flourishing  
 ‘ family. After this, the whole company approached  
 ‘ the prophets one by one, and asked her what ques-  
 ‘ tions they pleased, and she told them every thing that  
 ‘ they desired to know (72).’ What a striking picture  
 is this of the most eager curiosity and unsuspecting sim-  
 plicity on the one hand, and of the most consummate  
 cunning on the other! After the Anglo-Saxons and  
 Danes embraced the Christian religion, their veneration  
 for the persons, and confidence in the predictions, of  
 these impostors, gradually diminished; for the Christian  
 clergy were commanded by the canons ‘ to preach very  
 ‘ frequently against diviners, forcerers, auguries, omens,  
 ‘ charms, incantations, and all the filth of the wicked,  
 ‘ and dotages of the Gentiles (73).’ By the laws of the  
 church very heavy penances, and by the laws of the state  
 very severe punishments, were inflicted both on those  
 who practised these delusive arts, and on those who con-  
 sulted them (74).

Hospita-  
 lity of the  
 Anglo-  
 Saxons.

Hospitality may be justly reckoned among the nation-  
 al virtues of the Anglo-Saxons. This virtue they de-  
 rived from their ancestors the ancient Germans: ‘ For  
 ‘ in social entertainments and hospitality, no nation was  
 ‘ ever more liberal. They received all comers without  
 ‘ exception into their houses, and entertained them in  
 ‘ the best manner their circumstances could afford.  
 ‘ When all their provisions were consumed, they con-  
 ‘ ducted their guests to the next house, without any in-  
 ‘ vitation, where they were received with the same  
 ‘ frankness, and entertained with the same genero-  
 ‘ sity (75).’ After the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons

(72) *Erin's Rauga Saga*, apud Bartholin. p. 691.

(73) *Johnson's Canons*, A. D. 747. c. 3.

(74) *Spelman. Council. t. 1. p. 294—515.*

(75) *Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 21.*

to Christianity, their natural dispositions to hospitality were encouraged and strengthened by religious motives: for the Anglo-Saxon clergy were commanded by the canons to practise hospitality themselves, and to recommend the practice of it very frequently and earnestly to their people (76). The English kings in this period spent a considerable portion of their revenues in entertaining strangers, and their own nobility and clergy, particularly at the three great festivals of Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide (77). The English nobility, in imitation of their princes, consumed the greatest part of their large estates in a rude abundant kind of hospitality; of which all who thought proper were welcome to partake (78). Monasteries, in those times, were a kind of public-houses, where travellers and strangers of all ranks were lodged and entertained.

Chastity in their youth, and conjugal fidelity after marriage, may also be numbered among the national virtues of the Anglo-Saxons. Their ancestors, the ancient Germans, were famous for both these virtues. Their chastity and conjugal fidelity.

‘The intercourse between the sexes among them did not commence till both had arrived at full maturity of age and strength. The laws of matrimony were observed with great strictness. Examples of adultery were extremely rare, and punished with much severity. The husband of an adulteress, in the presence of her relations, cut off her hair, stripped her almost naked, turned her out of his house, and whipped her from one end of the village to the other. A woman who had been thus exposed, never recovered her character; and neither youth, beauty, nor riches, could ever procure her another husband (79).’ The Anglo-Saxons were much confirmed in these virtues which they derived from their ancestors, by the precepts of Christianity, after they embraced that religion. It cannot, however, be denied, that the imprudent zeal of the Christian clergy, in attempting to carry this virtue to a greater height than the laws of nature, and the good of society, will admit, had a very bad effect on the manners of the people, especially of the ecclesiastics, in this re-

(76) Spelman. Concil. t. i. p. 276. 601.

(77) Anglia Sacra, t. 2. p. 199. (78) W. Malmf. p. 58.

(79) Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 18, 19, 20.

spect. By endeavouring to preserve virginity, they destroyed chastity, and gave birth to many unnatural vices, which must not be mentioned (80). The Danish soldiers, who were quartered upon the English in the reigns of Athelstan, and several of his successors, being idle, insolent, and debauched, corrupted many of the English women, both married and unmarried, by dressing better than the Englishmen, and by other arts (81). By these and some other means, this virtue declined so much among the people of England, that before the end of this period very few vestiges of their ancient innocence and modesty remained; and this dissolution of manners is represented, both by the historians and divines of those times, as one of the chief causes of their ruin (82).

Fondness  
for their  
families  
and relations.

The Anglo-Saxons, as well as their ancestors the ancient Germans, were remarkable for the warmth of their affections to their family and relations (83). But these affections, which are so amiable when kept within due bounds, were by them carried to excess; and every family or clan formed a kind of combination, which adopted all the passions, and prosecuted all the quarrels, of its particular members, however unjust and lawless, not against the offender only, but against his whole family. This gave occasion to family feuds and bickerings, which were attended with manifold inconveniences. To restrain these private wars between great families, which disturbed the public tranquillity, and prevented the regular course of justice, many laws were made, particularly by king Edmund, who reigned from A. D. 940 to A. D. 946 (84). By one of these laws it is declared, that a murderer shall alone be obnoxious to the resentment of the relations of him whom he had murdered, and not his whole family, as formerly; and that if any of these relations take vengeance on any other than the murderer, he shall forfeit all his goods, and be prosecuted as an enemy to the king and all his friends. By another, a method is settled for compromising all disputes between the family of the murderer and that of

(80) Vide Wilkenſii Concilia, t. i. p. 118, &c.

(81) Chron. Wallingford, apud Gale, t. i. p. 547.

(82) W. Maimſ. p. 58. Sermo Lupi, apud Huckerſii Diſſertat. Epiſt. p. 102.

(83) Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 21.

(84) Wilkins Leges Saxonice, p. 73.



the person killed, in an amicable manner. These and other laws, together with the great calamities which befel the English in the reign of Ethelred the Unready, and destroyed many noble families, so much relaxed the ties of blood, that bishop Lupus, who flourished towards the end of that unhappy reign, complains,—‘ That in his time relations had little more attachment to one another than to strangers; and that the natural affection of parents to children, and of children to parents, and of brothers to each other, was very much diminished (85).’ So much did the manners of the English change in this particular in the course of this period!

The English reader, it is hoped, will not be much offended, though he is not presented in this place with a very minute detail of the vices of his ancestors. There seems to be no necessity for this; and as it is an unpleasant subject, it shall be dispatched in as few words as possible.

Vices of  
the Anglo-  
Saxons.

We have good reason to believe, that bloodshed and murder were very frequent among a people so brave, fierce, and passionate, as the Anglo-Saxons and Danes; especially when we consider, that they were always armed; and that a certain price was set upon the limbs and lives of all the members of society, from the sovereign to the slave (86).

Frequent  
murders.

The great propensity of the Saxons, and the still greater propensity of the Danes, to piracy, hath been already mentioned. Both these nations were also much addicted to theft and robbery. This appears from every part of their history, and is evident from all their laws, which contain a prodigious number of regulations for preventing or punishing these crimes (87).

Theft.

The prodigious multiplicity of oaths among the Anglo-Saxons greatly diminished their solemnity, and gave occasion to much perjury; which is represented by their own writers as one of their national vices (88). This multiplicity of oaths in criminal causes was owing to the great number of compurgators required by law, which in some cases amounted to forty or fifty. In civil causes, each party endeavoured to bring as great a number of witnesses as possible into the field, which were drawn up

Perjury.

(85) *Sermo Lupi*, apud Hickeſii *Dilectat.* Epist. p. 101.

(86) *Id.* *ibid.*

(87) Wilkins *Leges Saxonice*, passim.

(88) Hickeſii *Dilectat.* Epist. p. 104, 105.

like two little armies, consisting sometimes of a thousand on one side (89).

Bribery.

Bribing judges, and even kings, to influence them in their decisions of law-suits, seems to have been a very common practice among the Anglo-Saxons in this period, especially towards its conclusion. Many of these infamous transactions are related by our ancient historians as common occurrences, without the least mark of surprise or disapprobation (90). Nay, Edward the Confessor, notwithstanding all his boasted sanctity, is not ashamed to mention (in an award of his which is still extant) a handsome bribe which he had received from one of the parties, as one of the grounds of his decision (91).

Tyranny  
and op-  
pression.

Tyranny, cruelty, and oppression of their inferiors, were prevailing vices of the great men among the Danes and Anglo-Saxons towards the end of this period, when a kind of aristocracy had taken place. 'The poor and indigent are circumvented and cruelly treated; nay, their own persons, and those of their children, are often seized by force, and sold for slaves. Widows are unjustly compelled to marry contrary to their inclinations; or if they refuse, are cruelly oppressed, and reduced to misery (92).' As the Godwin family, in particular, had become too great for subjects; so the sons of that family were guilty of the most outrageous acts of cruelty and oppression. 'When they beheld any country-seat that pleased their fancy, they gave directions to their followers to murder the proprietor of it, and his whole family, in the night, and then obtained a grant of the house and the estate. Yet these were the men who were the judges and rulers of the land (93).'

Intemper-  
ance in  
eating and  
drinking.

Intemperance and excess in eating and drinking are acknowledged by all their ancient writers to have been the most prevailing vices both of the Anglo-Saxons and Danes. 'The nobility (says William of Malmesbury) were much addicted to lust and gluttony; but excessive drinking was the common vice of all ranks of people, in which they spent whole nights and days without intermission (94).' All their meetings termi-

(89) *Historia Eliensis*, c. 35.

(90) *Hist. Ramsien.* c. 114. *Hist. Eliensis*, c. 42.

(91) *Hist. Ramsien.* c. 113.

(92) *Hickesii Epist. Dissertat.* p. 100.

(93) *Hen. Hunt.* l. 6. p. 210.

(94) *W. Malmf.* l. 3. p. 58.

nated in riotous excessive drinking, not excepting even their religious festivals; on which they used to drink large draughts of liquor, to the honour of Christ, the Virgin Mary, the apostles, and other saints (95). Thus, when king Edmund I. celebrated the festival of St. Augustin, the apostle of the English, at Puckle church in Gloucestershire, 26th May A. D. 946, with all his courtiers and nobility, they were so overpowered with liquor, that they beheld their sovereign engaged in a disgraceful struggle with a lawless ruffian, by whom he was at last murdered, without having either strength or presence of mind to give him the least assistance (96). Edgar the Peaceable, who mounted the throne about nine years after the death of Edmund, endeavoured to give some check to these shameful excesses, which were productive of many mischiefs. One of these regulations to this purpose is so curious that it merits a place in history. It was the custom in those times, that a whole company drunk out of one large vessel, which was handed about from one to another, every one drinking as much as he thought proper. This custom occasioned frequent quarrels, some alleging, that others drank a greater quantity of the liquor than fell to their share; and at other times some of the company compelling others to drink more than they inclined. To prevent these quarrels, Edgar commanded the drinking-vessels to be made with knobs of brass, or some other metal, at certain distances from each other; and decreed, that no person, under a certain penalty, should either drink himself, or compel another to drink, more than from one of these knobs or pegs to another, at one draught (97). This shews in what a serious light drinking was viewed, even by government, in this period. Many other laws of drinking may be seen in the work quoted below (98).

But it is now time to put an end to this unpleasant subject, which I shall finish with the candid observation of the most sensible and impartial of our ancient historians, at the conclusion of his character of the Anglo-Saxons. ‘ Though these vices were too general, they were not universal. For I know that many of the

These  
vices not  
universal.

(95) Bartholin. l. 2. c. 12. Northern Antiquities, t. 1. p. 311.

(96) W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 7. (97) Id. l. 2. c. 8. p. 31.

(98) Bartholin. de Causis Contemptu apud Danos Mortis, p. 133, &c.

‘ English clergy in those times pursued the plain paths of piety and virtue; and that not a few of the laity of all ranks pleased God by their conversations. Let no man therefore be displeased with what I have said, since I have not involved the innocent and guilty in the same disgrace (99).’

Remarkable customs of the Anglo-Saxons and Danes.

So many of the remarkable customs of the Anglo-Saxons and Danes who inhabited England in this period, have been occasionally mentioned in this and the preceding chapters of this book, that little remains to be said on that subject in this place. That the reader, however, may not be disappointed in his expectations, it may not be improper to take notice, in a few words,—of their modes of address, and expressions of respect and civility,—their manner of treating the fair sex,—their ceremonies of marriage,—their methods of education,—rites of sepulture,—customs in peace and war,—the retinues and equipages of the great, &c.

Rude and unpolished in their address.

The Anglo-Saxons and Danes appear to have been no great admirers of a respectful polite address, but rather rude and haughty in their deportment. This is acknowledged by their own writers, who frankly confess, that the French in those times very much excelled them, and all the other nations of Europe, in politeness and elegance of manners (100). They represent it as a fortunate circumstance in the life of Egbert, the first English monarch, and also of the celebrated St. Dunstan, that they had both resided some time in France, and had there acquired an easy engaging address, quite unknown in their own country (101). The Welsh appear to have been equally unpolished in this period, since there was a necessity for making a law, that none of the courtiers should give the queen a blow, or snatch any thing with violence out of her hands, under the penalty of forfeiting her majesty’s protection (102). It would be easy to produce many examples of rudeness and indelicacy that were established by law, and practised even in courts of justice (if they were not unbecoming the purity that ought to be observed in history), which would hardly be believed in the present age. That example of this which the learned reader will find below, in the Latin language, will be

(99) W. Malmf. l. 3. p. 57.

(100) Id. l. 2. c. 1.

(101) Id. l. 2. c. 1. J. Wallingford, apud Gale, t. 1. p. 543.

(102) Leges Wallicæ, p. 11. l. 1. c. 8.



a sufficient specimen, and would not have found a place here, if it had not been already published by a reverend and respectable author, after mature deliberation (103). But though the Anglo-Saxons, Danes, Welsh, and other nations who inhabited Britain in this period, were in general indelicate and unpolished in their manners; yet we may be certain, that inferiors approached their superiors with gestures which expressed submission; that persons of condition accosted each other with tokens of respect, and relations with marks of friendship. For all these affections and feelings being natural to mankind, the expressions of them are also natural and universal. We have already seen the humiliating tokens of submission which the imperious Danes exacted from the English, with which it is probable all slaves approached their masters; and many examples of friends kissing and embracing each other at meeting occur in the history of those times (104). As both the Anglo-Saxons and Danes were exceedingly superstitious, the clergy were the chief objects of their veneration; and we sometimes hear of kings, queens, and nobles, kneeling, and even prostrating themselves on the ground, before their spiritual guides, to receive their commands or benedictions (105).

The English in this period treated the fair sex with a degree of attention and respect which could hardly have been expected from a people so unpolished in their manners. This way of thinking and acting they undoubtedly derived from their ancestors the ancient Germans; who not only admired and loved their women on account of their personal charms; but entertained a kind of religious veneration for them as the peculiar favourites of heaven, and consulted them as oracles (106). Agreeable to this, we find some of the Anglo-Saxon ladies were admitted into their most august assemblies, and great attention paid to their opinions; and so considerable was their influence in the most important affairs, that they were the chief instruments of introducing the Christian

Respectful  
behaviour  
to the fair  
sex.

(103) Si mulier stuprata lege cum viro agere velit, et si vir factum pernegaverit, mulier, membro virili sinistra prehenso, et dextra reliquis sanctorum imposita, juret super illas, quod is per vim se isto membro vitiaverit. *Leges Wallica*, p. 85.

(104) Eddius Vita Wilfredi, c. 50. 58.

(105) Id. c. 50.

(106) Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 8.

religion into almost all the kingdoms of the heptarchy (107). Many of the Anglo-Saxon ladies of the highest rank were inrolled among their saints, and became the objects of the superstitious veneration of their countrymen (108). A great number of laws were made to secure the rights, protect the persons, and defend the honour of the fair sex from all insults: they were courted with no little gallantry, and many brave exploits performed with a view to gain their favour (109). It must indeed be confessed, that the English ladies, especially those of the highest rank, were involved in a temporary disgrace and degradation towards the end of the eighth century. This was occasioned by the base and criminal conduct of Eadburga, the daughter of Offa king of Mercia, and queen of Beorthric king of Wessex; who, after having committed many horrid crimes, at length poisoned her husband, and a young nobleman who was his favourite, with one potion; which excited such a violent and universal indignation against her, that she was obliged to make her escape to the continent. The people of Wessex, finding that they could not execute their vengeance on the person of the offender, testified their repentment, by making a law, ‘ That none of the kings of Wessex should from thenceforward permit their consorts to be crowned, to sit with them on the throne, or to enjoy the name of queen (110).’ But Asserius, who relates this transaction at great length, as he had received it from the mouth of his master Alfred the Great, expresses his disapprobation of this law in the strongest terms, declaring it to be a most perverse and detestable law, directly contrary to the customs of all those nations who were descended from the ancient Germans. He observes further, that this law was not long observed. For Ethelwulf, the second monarch of England, having married Judith, the daughter of Charles the Bald king of France, placed her on the throne, in direct opposition to the barbarous custom which had for some time prevailed in his country, without incurring the displeasure of his subjects (111). The wives of the English nobility, who had shared in the disgraces of the

(107) Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 3. c. 25.

(108) See Chap. 2. W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 13.

(109) Wilkin. Leges Saxonice. Northern Antiquit. vol. 1. c. 12.

(110) Asser. Vita Ælfredi, p. 3.

(111) Id. ibid.

royal comforts, gradually recovered their former dignity and influence in society, which was at least as great in England in this period as in any country of Europe (112).

The legal ceremonies and customs in contracting marriages among the Anglo-Saxons have been already mentioned (113); and therefore nothing now remains but to take notice of a few of the arbitrary fashions and changing ceremonies with which the celebration of their marriages was commonly attended. But these fashions and ceremonies being regulated by fancy and caprice, rather than by law, it cannot be supposed that they were either constant or universal. As the marriage was always celebrated at the house of the bridegroom, and all the expence and trouble of it was devolved on him, he was allowed a considerable time to make the necessary preparations. It was not, however, esteemed gallant or fashionable to allow more than six or seven weeks to elapse between the time of contracting and the celebration of the marriage. On the day before the wedding, all the friends and relations of the bridegroom having been invited, arrived at his house, and spent the time in feasting, and in preparing for the approaching ceremony. Next morning the bridegroom's company mounted on horseback, completely armed, and proceeded in great state and order, under the command of one who was called the *forewistaman*, or *foremost man*, to receive and conduct the bride in safety to the house of her future husband. The company proceeded in this martial array to do honour to the bride, and to prevent her being intercepted and carried off by any of her former lovers. The bride in this procession was attended by her guardian, and other male relations, led by a matron, who was called the *bride's-woman*, and followed by a company of young maidens, who were called the *bride's-maids*. She was received by the bridegroom at her arrival, and solemnly betrothed to him by her guardian in a set form of words (114). After this ceremony was performed, the bridegroom, the bride, and their united companies, went in procession to the church, attended with music, where they received the nuptial benediction from a priest. This was in some places given under the nuptial veil, which was a square piece of cloth, supported by a tall

(112) Spelman's Life of Alfred, p. 25.

(113) See chap. 3. p. 246—249.

(114) Id. *ibid.* p. 248.

man at each corner over the bridegroom and bride, to conceal her virgin blushes (115). When the bride was a widow, the veil was never used, as being esteemed unnecessary. After the nuptial benediction was given, both the bridegroom and bride were crowned by the priest with crowns made of flowers, which were kept in the church for that purpose (116). Marriages, on that account, and for several other reasons, were most commonly celebrated in the summer season. When these ceremonies were finished, the whole company returned in procession to the bridegroom's house, and sat down to the nuptial feast; which was as sumptuous and abundant as the entertainer could afford. The afternoon and evening were spent by the youth of both sexes in mirth and dancing, most commonly in the open air; and by the rest of the company in carousing, in which they very much delighted. At night the bride was conducted by her women-attendants to her apartment, and placed in the marriage-bed; and soon after the bridegroom was conducted by the men in the same manner; and having both drunk of the marriage-cup, with all who were present, the whole company retired. The wedding-dresses of the bride and three of her maidens, and of the bridegroom and three of his attendants, were of a peculiar colour and fashion, and could not be used on any other occasion. These dresses, therefore, were anciently the perquisite of the minstrels or musicians who had attended the wedding; but afterwards, when the minstrels fell into disgrace, they were commonly given to some church or monastery (117). Next morning the whole company assembled in the apartment of the new-married pair before they arose, to hear the husband declare the *morgægift* or *morning-gift*; and a competent number of his relations became sureties to the relations of his wife, that he would perform what he promised (118). The feasting and rejoicing continued several days after the marriage, and seldom ended till all the provisions were consumed. To indemnify the husband in some degree for all these expences, the relations of both parties made him some present or other at their departure (119).

(115) Muratori, t. 2. p. 111.

(116) Olai Magni, p. 553.

(117) Sternhöök, l. 2. c. 1. p. 165.

(118) Id. ibid.

(119) Id. ibid.



When marriages proved fruitful, the mothers generally nurfed their own children. This laudable practice doth not feem to have been quite univerfal among the Anglo-Saxon ladies of high rank, even in the former part of this period; for pope Gregory, in his letter to St. Auguftin, the apoftle of the Englifh, fays, ‘ A certain wicked cuftom hath arifen among married people, that fome ladies refufe to nurfe the children whom they have brought forth, but deliver them to other women to be nurfed (120).’

Mothers  
nurfed  
their own  
children.

It is faid to have been the cuftom of the Anglo-Saxons to give their children names as foon as they were born; and thefe names were all expreffive of fome great or good quality (121). Surnames, or family-names, were not in ufe among the Englifh in this period, or at leaft not till the reign of Edward the Confeflor (122). But as feveral perfons who lived near to each other fometimes had the fame proper name, it became neceffary, in converfation and writing, in order to diftinguifh the perfon of whom they fpoke and wrote, to add fome word to his name descriptive of his perfon, difpofition, &c.; as, *the Long*,—*the Black*,—*the White*,—*the Good*,—*the Peaceable*,—*the Unready*, &c. This word, by being constantly added to his name, became a kind of fecondary name; but did not defcend to his pofterity, nor become the furname of his family (123). Sometimes a particular perfon was diftinguifhed from others of the fame name, by adding the name of the place where he dwelt, or the name of his father, and by feveral other ways (124). It may however be obferved, that thofe words which in this period were ufed as a kind of nicknames to diftinguifh particular perfons of the fame proper names from each other, in the next period became family-names, and defcended to the pofterity of thefe perfons, who probably refembled them in thefe particulars; and from thefe words many of our modern furnames are derived (125). By fuch flow and infenfible degrees are the moft prevailing cuftoms eftablifhed.

Names  
and fur-  
names.

(120) Bedæ Hift. Ecclef. l. i. c. 17.

(121) Camden’s Remains, p. 45. 55, &c. Verftigan, c. 8.

(122) Id. ibid. p. 110.

(123) Camden’s Remains, p. 110. Verftigan, c. 8.

(124) Hicckfli Differtat. Epift. p. 23. Verftigan, c. 9.

(125) Verftigan, c. 9.

Trial of  
children's  
courage.

As the Anglo-Saxons admired valour and intrepidity above all other qualities, they were very anxious to discover whether their sons would be possessed of them or not; and had various methods of putting their courage to the trial even in their infancy. The following is said to have been one of the most common of those modes of trial. Upon a certain day appointed for that purpose, the family and friends being assembled, the father placed his infant son on the slanting side of the roof of his house, and there left him. If the child began to cry, and appeared to be afraid of falling, the spectators were much dejected, and prognosticated that he would be a coward; but if he clung boldly to the thatch; and discovered no marks of fear, they were transported with joy, and pronounced that he would prove a *floutherce*, i. e. a brave warrior (126).

Methods  
of educa-  
tion.

The Anglo-Saxons being a rude and fierce people at their arrival in Britain, and for several ages after, it is not to be imagined that they educated their children in a tender and delicate manner, of which they had no ideas, and which would have been very improper for the course of life for which they were designed. Like their ancestors the ancient Germans, persons even of the highest rank accustomed their children to encounter dangers, and to bear cold, hunger, pain, and labour, from their very infancy, that they might be fitted for hunting, which was to be their chief diversion, and war, which was to be their chief employment (127). Letters were seldom thought of as any part of the education of the children of the greatest families. When Alfred the Great, the fourth son of king Ethelwulf, was twelve years of age, neither he, nor any of his three elder brothers, could read one word of their native language; and it was by a kind of accident, rather than any formed design, that these princes were afterwards taught to read; though much pains had been taken about their education, and they had been instructed with the greatest care, in hunting, riding, and all martial exercises (128). It is also observed by Asserius, as one of the greatest changes introduced by his hero Alfred the Great, that his youngest son Ethelwerd, who was designed for the church, was

(126) Howell's General History, part 4. p. 335.

(127) Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 20.

(128) Asser. Vita Alfredi, p. 8.

taught to read before he was taught to hunt (129). In a word, the Anglo-Saxon and Danish youth enjoyed much freedom, and were allowed to spend their time in rural sports and martial exercises; which contributed not a little to increase their strength, agility, and courage, and fit them for the toils of war.

The people of Germany and Scandinavia distinguished the different periods of their history by the different Rites of sepulture. rites of sepulture which prevailed in these periods. In the most ancient period they burnt their dead, which was therefore called *burna olld*, or *the age of burning*; in the succeeding period they buried their dead without burning, and raised heaps of stones or earth over their bodies, which was therefore called *haugs olld*, or *the age of hillocks* (130). Though the end of the first, and commencement of the second of these periods, are not distinctly marked; yet it seems to have taken place before the arrival of the Saxons and Danes in Britain, who generally, if not always, buried their dead without burning, and raised barrows over them, to perpetuate their memory. Thus when Hubba, a famous Danish chieftain, was slain in battle by the English, A. D. 878, his followers buried his body, and raised a prodigious mount of earth over it, which they called *Hubbastow*, or *the place of Hubba* (131). Though this mount is now swept away by the sea, yet the place on the strand near Apple-dore in Devonshire, where it once stood, is still known by the name of *Whibblestow* (132). When they deposited the body on the ground, and began to cover it with earth, the whole company made the loudest and most bitter lamentations (133). It was so much the custom of the Anglo-Saxons to lay the bodies of their dead on the surface of the ground, and cover them with stones and earth, that they did this even when they buried them in churches; and the floors of some churches were so much incumbered with these little mounts, that they became quite unfit for the celebration of divine service, and were on that account abandoned (134). The inconveniencies of this ancient practice were at length so sen-

(129) Affer. Vita Ælfredi, p. 13. (130) Bartholin. l. i. c. 8.

(131) Brompton, col. 809. (132) Dr. Borlase's Cornwall, p. 221.

(133) Brompton, col. 809.

(134) Wilkins Concilia, t. i. p. 268. Johnson's Canons, A. D.

sibly felt, that several canons were made against burying any in churches, except priests, or saints, or such as paid very well for that privilege; and obliging those that were buried in them to be deposited in graves of a proper depth under the pavement (135). The house in which a dead body lay before it was buried, was a scene of continued feasting, singing, dancing, and all kinds of gambols and diversions, which occasioned no small expence to the family of the deceased (136). In some places of the north, they kept the dead unburied, till they had consumed all the wealth which he had left behind him in these games and feastings (137). This custom had prevailed in the times of Paganism, and was discouraged by the church; but it was too agreeable to their excessive fondness for feasting and riot to be soon abandoned. The manner of preparing the body, and the funeral procession of the famous Wilfred, archbishop of York, who died at Oundle in Northamptonshire A. D. 708, and was buried at Rippon, are thus described by his historian Eddius: ‘ Upon a certain day, many abbots and clergy  
‘ met those who conducted the corpse of the holy bishop  
‘ in a herse, and earnestly begged that they might be  
‘ allowed to wash the sacred body, and dress it honour-  
‘ ably, according to its dignity; and they obtained per-  
‘ mission. Then one of the abbots, named *Bacula*,  
‘ spreading his surplice on the ground, the brethren de-  
‘ posited the holy body upon it, washed it with their  
‘ own hands, dressed it in the pontifical habits; and then  
‘ taking it up, carried it towards the appointed place,  
‘ singing psalms and hymns in the fear of God. Having  
‘ advanced a little, they again deposited the corpse, pitch-  
‘ ed a tent over it, bathed the sacred body in pure water,  
‘ dressed it in robes of fine linen, placed it in the herse,  
‘ and proceeded, singing psalms, towards the monastery  
‘ of Rippon. When they approached that monastery,  
‘ the whole family of it came out to meet them, bearing  
‘ the holy relics. Of all this numerous company there  
‘ was hardly one who abstained from tears; and all rais-  
‘ ing their voices, and joining in hymns and songs, they  
‘ conducted the body into the church, which the holy  
‘ bishop had built, and dedicated to St. Peter, and there

(135) Johnson's Canons, A. D. 994. c. 9.

(136) Id. A. D. 957. c. 3.

(137) Vita Ælfredi a Spelmanno, Append. 6. p. 208.



‘ deposited it in the most solemn and honourable manner (138).’

The Anglo-Saxons and Danes being much engaged in Customs in war. war, had many singular customs relating to it; of which it is not necessary to make a complete collection. As soon as a war was resolved upon, it was one of their first objects to discover what would be the event of it; not by comparing their own forces with those of their enemies, but by attempting to discover the will of Heaven by various arts of divination. The only one of these arts which seems to have had the least connection with any thing like reason, is that one which is thus described by Tacitus, as practised by their ancestors the ancient Germans: ‘ It is their custom, when they engage in war with any neighbouring nation, to procure a captive of that nation by some means or other; him they oblige to engage in single combat with one of their own people, each armed after the manner of his country; and from the event of that combat, they draw a presage of their future victories or defeats (139).’ They were at no less pains to gain the favour, than to discover the will of Heaven; in order to which, while they were Pagans, they offered many sacrifices to their gods, and sometimes even human victims, before they embarked in their military expeditions (140). Their priests, bearing their idols, constantly attended their armies, exercised military discipline, and determined what were the most fortunate seasons for giving battle (141). After the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons and Danes to Christianity, they long retained these ancient customs, a little changed, and accommodated to their new religion. Before a crew of Christian pirates set sail on a plundering expedition, with the pious design of robbing and murdering all who fell in their way, they never neglected to take the sacrament, to confess their sins to a priest, and to perform the penances which he prescribed, in hopes (says my author) that God would bless and prosper them in their designs (142). The Anglo-Saxon armies were always attended by a great number of ecclesiastics to pray for their success, who constantly carried with them their

(138) Eddius in Vita Wilfredi, c. 63.

(139) Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 10.

(140) Dudo St. Quintin, de Morib. Norman. l. 1.

(141) Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 10.

(142) Saxo Grammat. l. 14.

most venerable relics, in order to secure the protection of those saints to whom they had belonged (143).

Method of  
making  
knights.

Nor did these churchmen confine themselves within their own province of prayer, but, like their Pagan predecessors, interfered very much with the conduct of the armies which they attended, by inflicting the censures of the church on those who behaved improperly, and conferring military honours, particularly knighthood, with the following ceremonies: ‘ The person who was to be knighted first confessed all his sins to the bishop, abbot, monk, or priest, and performed all the acts of devotion, and other penances, which he enjoined. He then watched a whole night in the church, and next morning, before he heard mass, he solemnly offered his sword upon the altar. After the reading of the gospel, the priest blessed the sword, took it from the altar, and with his benediction, hung it about the soldier’s neck; who having communicated of the sacred mysteries at the same mass, was proclaimed a true and lawful knight (144).’

War-song.

When the Anglo-Saxons advanced to battle they made a most horrid and tremendous noise, by singing, shouting, and clashing their arms; and to prevent their horses being frightened at that noise, they had a custom of making them deaf; which was at length condemned for its cruelty by the canons of the church (145). The other military customs of the Anglo-Saxons which had any thing remarkable or singular in them, have been already mentioned in our account of their military arts (146).

Retinues  
of the  
great.

The Anglo-Saxon kings, queens, and nobles, lived in a kind of rude magnificence and state, and were always surrounded with a crowd of officers, retainers, and servants. ‘ Edwin king of Northumberland (says Bede) lived in so much splendour, that he had not only standards carried before him in time of war, but even in times of peace, when he travelled with his ordinary retinue through the provinces of his kingdom. Nay, when he was at home, and walked through the streets of his capital, he had always a standard carried before him, of that kind which the Romans call *Tufa*, and

(143) *Historia Ramsien.* c. 72.

(144) *Ingulphus Historia*, edit. a Pen. Savile, p. 515.

(145) *Wilkins Concil.* i. p. 150. (146) *Id.* p. 5.

‘ the English call *Tunf* (147).’ This kind of standard was made of feathers of various colours, in the form of a globe, and fixed on the top of a pole. Canute the Great, who was the richest and most magnificent prince in Europe of his time, never appeared in public, or made any journey, without a retinue of three thousand men, well mounted and completely armed (148). These numerous attendants were called the king’s *houfecarles*, and formed a corps of body-guards, or household troops, for the honour and safety of the prince’s person.

Chariots for travelling were not quite unknown in England in this period, though they seem to have been very rare, and only used by queens. Thus we are told by Eddius, in the life of archbishop Wilfred, that when the queen of Northumberland travelled in her chariot from place to place, she hung up in it a bag with the precious relics which she had violently taken from that prelate (149).

It would be tedious, and unbecoming the dignity of history, to enumerate all the trifling peculiarities in the manners and customs of the Anglo-Saxons, which are mentioned by the author quoted below, to whom we must refer such of our readers as desire to be acquainted with these *minutiae* (150).

The two most ancient and original languages of Europe were the Celtic and Teutonic, or Gothic; from which two many other languages were derived; and particularly those that were spoken by the several nations which inhabited Britain in this period (151).

It hath been already proved,—that the language of the ancient Britons, when they were first invaded by the Romans, was a dialect of the Celtic;—that the great body of that people retained this language through all the Roman times;—that they spoke it at the arrival of the Saxons, and transmitted it to their posterity in Wales, by whom it is still spoken. The Caledonian nations in the north of Britain spoke also a dialect of the same very ancient language; and as their posterity in the highlands of Scotland still remain unmixed with any

Chariots  
used by  
queens.

Language  
of the  
Scots and  
Welsh.

(147) Bedæ. Hist. Eccles. l. 2. c. 16.

(148) Sueno Agonis, p. 152. (149) Eddius Vita Wilfredi, c. 33.

(150) Vertigan’s Retitution of decayed Intelligence, chap. 3.

(151) See Preface to Northern Antiquities.

other people, they continue to speak the language of their remote ancestors, with little variation. Venerable Bede indeed observes, that in his time the Britons, Scots, and Picts, spoke three different languages; by which he probably means, that the languages of these nations were not exactly the same, but differed considerably from each other, as the Welsh and Erse, the English and Scotch, do at present (152). It will not be necessary to take any further notice of the Celtic tongue, or the dialects of it which have so long been spoken in Wales, and in the highlands and islands of Scotland, either in this or the succeeding periods of this work; because they have remained through many ages without any very material alterations.

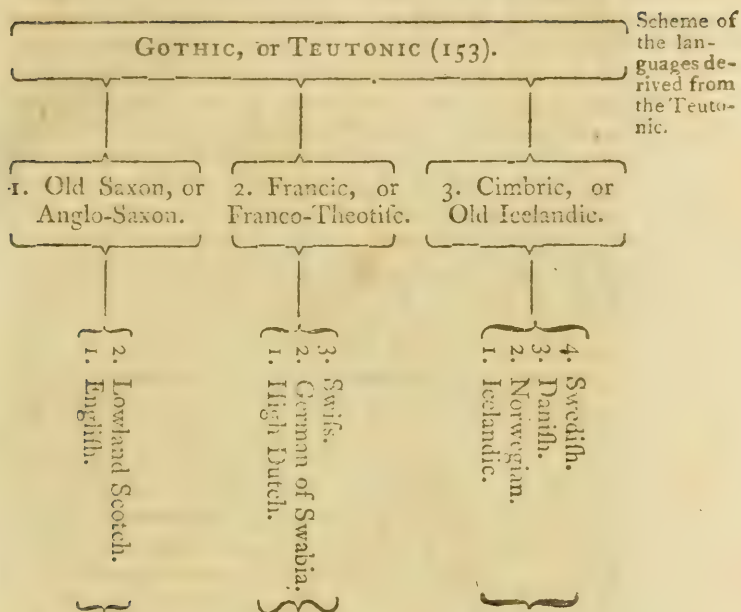
Language  
of the  
Anglo-  
Saxons  
and  
Danes.

The Gothic or Teutonic tongue was another of the most ancient and original languages of Europe; different dialects of which were spoken by all the nations of Germany and Scandinavia, and by all the numerous tribes which issued from these countries, in the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries, and founded so many powerful states on the ruins of the Roman empire. The following table will give the reader a distinct view of the chief tongues, ancient and modern, which have descended from this venerable parent of languages; and for his further satisfaction he will find, in the Appendix, No. 5. specimens of these tongues; from which their affinity to each other, and to their common parent, will very plainly appear.

(152) See vol. 1. book 1. c. 7. &c. Bedæ Hist. Eccles. l. 1. c. 7.

GOthic,





The modern Italian, French, and Spanish languages, are not inserted in the above table among the descendents of the ancient Gothic, though kingdoms were founded in Italy, France, and Spain, by nations who spoke dialects of that language; because these nations, instead of extirpating the ancient inhabitants of these countries, who were far more numerous than themselves, settled amongst them, and mixed with them; and by that means lost the greatest part of their own ancient languages, and adopted those of the nations which they had conquered. In all these three languages, indeed, there is a tincture of the Teutonic; but they are chiefly derived from the Latin, and some other tongues, which had been spoken by the original inhabitants of these countries, and by other nations which had occasionally settled in them (154).

Reasons why the Italian, French, and Spanish languages, are not inserted in the above scheme.

(153) See the Preface to Northern Antiquities.

(154) Verflagan, c. 7. Muratori, t. 2. p. 990.

The Sax-  
on lan-  
guage.

The Anglo-Saxon and Danish are the only descendents of the ancient Gothic, in the above table, with which we are here concerned; because these languages were spoken by the Anglo-Saxons and Danes who inhabited England and the south-east parts of Scotland in this period. Nor will it be necessary to say much concerning the Danish; because it did not long remain a distinct tongue in any part of England, but was blended with the Anglo-Saxon, and formed a particular dialect of that language (155). This Dano-Saxonic dialect was chiefly spoken in the kingdom of Northumberland, where the Danes abounded most; and it is sometimes given as a reason, by our ancient historians, for the Danes landing so frequently in that country,—‘that there was a great mixture of Danes among the inhabitants of it; and that their language had a great affinity with the Danish (156).’ That the Anglo-Saxon language was spoken in the south-east parts of Scotland, through the whole of this period, is undeniable (157). When Edgar the Peaceable, king of England, yielded Lothian to Kenneth II. king of Scotland, A. D. 975, it was on these express conditions,—that the people of that country should still be called Englishmen, be governed by the English laws, and be allowed to speak the English language (158).

Antiquity  
and excel-  
lency of  
the Saxon  
language.

Many extravagant things have been advanced concerning the great antiquity and superior excellency of the Anglo-Saxon tongue. According to some writers it was the most ancient and most excellent language in the world, spoken by the first parents of mankind in paradise; and from it they pretend to derive the names *Adam*, *Eve*, *Cain*, *Abel*, and all the antediluvian patriarchs (159). But leaving these extravagancies to their authors and admirers, it is sufficient to say, that the Teutonic or Anglo-Saxon tongue is so ancient, that it is impossible to trace it to its origin; and that it was so excellent and copious, in the period we are now examining, as to enable those who spoke it to express all their ideas with sufficient force and perspicuity (160).

(155) Hicckli Thesaur. t. i. p. 88, &c.

(156) J. Wallingford, edit. a Gale, p. 548.

(157) Camden's Remains, p. 21.

(158) J. Wallingford, edit. a Gale, p. 545.

(159) Yestling, c. 7. p. 149.

(160) Camden's Remains, p. 25.

It hath been also affirmed very positively, that the most ancient Anglo-Saxon tongue consisted almost entirely of words of one syllable (161). But of this it is impossible to produce any proof, as the most ancient specimens of that language which are now extant, do not remarkably abound in monosyllables, but contain a competent number of words, consisting of two, three and four syllables (162). It is indeed true, that the far greatest part of our present English words of one syllable are of Saxon origin; and this is all that can be affirmed with truth in this particular. It may even be observed, that some words which consist now only of one syllable consisted anciently of two;—as *king*, which was in Saxon *Cin-ing*, &c.

Some learned men have discovered, or imagined, a very remarkable affinity between the Greek and Anglo-Saxon, both in their radical words, and in their general structure; and it must be confessed, that they have shown no little learning and ingenuity in tracing that affinity (163). With this view, they have collected a considerable number of words, which are names of the most necessary and common things, and of a similar sound and sense in both languages. This similarity is indeed very great in some of these words; but in many others it seems to be fanciful and far-fetched. With regard to their general formation and structure, a great analogy hath been observed between these two languages,—in the termination of the infinitive of their verbs,—in the use of their articles and negatives,—in the manner of comparing their adjectives, and compounding their words, and in some other particulars (164). This affinity between these languages is supposed to have been occasioned by the vicinity, relationship, and commercial intercourse between the Goths and Greeks in very remote ages (165).

It is not to be imagined, that the Anglo-Saxon language continued in the same state through the whole of this long period which we are now considering; though

Contained  
many polysyllables.

Affinity  
with the  
Greek.

Changes in  
the Saxon  
language.

(161) Camden's Remains, p. 25.

(162) Wilkins Leges Saxon. p. 1, &c.

(163) Camden's Remains, p. 32, 33. Casaubon Dissertat. de Lingua Anglicana, p. 236. Clarke on Coins, p. 36, &c.

(164) Casaubon Dissertat. de Lingua Anglicana, p. 236.

(165) Id. ibid.

it would be too laborious, or rather impossible, to trace its gradual changes. No specimens are now remaining of the language spoken by the Anglo-Saxons before their conversion to Christianity; of which therefore we can have no certain knowledge. To give our English readers some faint idea at least of the language spoken by their remote ancestors in different parts, and at the conclusion of this period, it may not be improper to lay before them two copies of the Lord's prayer, which appear to be of different ages, and a charter of king Harold, which must have been written in the last year of this period, with very literal translations interlined. By an attentive inspection of these specimens, they will perceive the great difference that there is between the Anglo-Saxon and modern English; and at the same time they will discover the great resemblance, and gradual approaches of the former of these languages to the latter. The Anglo-Saxon, in all these specimens, and some others which are given in the Appendix, are printed in Roman, and not in Saxon letters, which would have rendered them quite unintelligible to the bulk of our readers.

Saxon copy of the Lord's prayer, and literal version. *The most ancient copy of the Lord's prayer in Saxon, with a very literal translation.*

Urin Fader thic arth in heofnas,  
Our Father which art in heaven,

1. Sic (166) gchal gud thin noma;  
Be hallowed thine name;
2. To cymeth thin ryc (167);  
To come thine kingdom;
3. Sic thin willa fuc is in heofnas and in eorþo;  
Be thine will so is in heaven and in earth;
4. Urin hlaf ofirwiftlic (168) fel (169) us to daig;  
Our loaf superexcellent give us to day;

(166) The syllable *ge* is here a mere expletive, and was prefixed by the Anglo-Saxons, as well as by the Greeks, to many of their words.

(167) Some vestige of this word still remains in the word *Uygen*.

(168) The great difference here is owing to the Saxon translators having put a different sense on the original.

(169) The verb *fellen*, or *fallan*, changed its meaning even in the Saxon times, and signified to *feed*, though anciently it had signified to *grow*.



5. And forgesse us scylda urna, sue we forgesan  
And forgive us debts ours, so we forgiven

scyldgum urum;  
debts of ours;

6. And no inlead usig in cufnung,  
And not lead us into temptation,

7. Ah gefrig usich from isle.  
But free us each from evil. Amen.

Though the above Saxon version of the Lord's prayer is evidently very ancient, and is said to have been written by Eadfredi, bishop of Lindisfarne, about A. D. 700; yet we may observe, that there are not above three or four words in it altogether obsolete, and quite unintelligible to an English reader (170). It may be proper also to take notice, that several words in the Saxon consist of more syllables than the same words in modern English, and not so much as one of fewer; for *rye* is a different word from *kingdom*, which came in its place.

Observations on this specimen.

*A later copy of the Lord's prayer in Saxon, with a very literal translation.*

Later copy of the Lord's prayer, with a literal translation.

Thu vre Fader the eart on heofinum,  
Thou our Father that art in heaven,

1. Cum thin ric;  
Come thine kingdom;
2. Si thin willa on eorþan swa swa on heofinum;  
Be thine will on earth so as in heaven;
3. Syle us to daeg urn daegthanlican hlaf;  
Give us to day our daily loaf;
4. And forgif us ure gyltas, swa swa we forgifath  
And forgive us our guilts, so as we forgive

tham the with us agyltath;  
them that against us are guilty;

5. And ne led us on costnung;  
And not lead us into temptation;

6. Ac alys us from yfle.  
And redeem us from evil.

Si it swo.  
Be it so.

This last copy of the Lord's prayer, which is supposed to have been written about two centuries after the former, hath still fewer obsolete words in it, and evidently approacheth nearer to modern English.

Another specimen.

The state of the Anglo-Saxon language, in the very last year of the present period, may be discovered even by an English reader, by perusing with attention the following short character of Harold our last Anglo-Saxon king, and comparing it with the interlined version; which is contrived to give its meaning in words as near as possible to the original, without any regard to elegance or propriety of expression:

Charter of king Harold, with a literal translation.

Harold king greet Ailnoth and Tovid, and  
Harold king greets Ailnoth and Tovid, and  
alle mine theines on Somerseten frendliche.  
all mine thanes in Somerset friendly.

And ic cyeth eou, that ic will that Giso  
And I kyth (171) to you, that I will that Giso

Bisheop beo his faca (172) werth and his focna  
Bishop be his fac ,worthy and his foc,

ofer his lond and ofer his mannen: and tolies  
over his land and over his men: and of toll

werth (173) and temes (174), and infangenes (175),  
worthy, and of slaves and of the trial of

theses,

(171) This verb, *to kyth*, in Saxon *cyethan* "to discover or "make known," is still used in the following verse of that version of the Psalms of David which is appointed to be sung in the church of Scotland:

Thou gracious to the gracious art,  
To upright men upright.

Pure to the pure, froward thou kyth'st,

Unto the froward wight.

*Psal.* xviii. 25, 26.

(172) *Saca* and *focna*, now commonly written *sac* and *foc*, signify "a privilege of holding courts and judging causes," called *saca*, within their own lands, called *focna*; and to be *sac* and *foc* worthy, was to have a right to this privilege. *Hickeys's Thesaur.* p. 159.

(173) *Tolles werth* was the privilege of holding a market, and exacting certain tolls or customs from those who frequented it. *Key's Saxon Diction.* in *roc*.

(174) *Temes* or *team* in Saxon signified a progeny or family of children; and to be *teams werth*, signified to have the property of their slaves, and of the children and posterity of these slaves. There are still some vestiges of this word in use,—as, "a *team*" of

thefes, binnen burckh and butan : fwo full  
 thieves, within burgh and without : fo full  
 and fwo forth fwo he furmift was on Edward  
 and fo forth as it firft was in Edward  
 kinges dage on alle thingan. And ich bidde eou  
 king's day in all things. And I bid you  
 alle, that ge been him on fultumes, at thys  
 all, that ye be to him affifting, his

Cristendome Godes yerichtten, for to fetten  
 Christian and God's rights, for to ftablifh  
 and to driven, loc thar him neth fy, and heo  
 and to drive, when there need be, and he  
 eoures fultumes bithyrfe; fwo fwo ich yetruthen  
 your fupport wanteth; fo as I confidence  
 to eou habbe, that we willan for mina lăven  
 in you have, that ye will for mine love.

And ich nille ye thefun that man, him æt  
 And I will not ye offend that man, or him in  
 anie thingan anye unlag beodthe. God  
 any thing any unlawful deed do. God  
 eu gehealde.  
 you hold,

From thefe specimens, the people of England will perceive, with pleasure, that the language which was fpoken by their ancestors above a thousand years ago, was copious, expreffive, and mufical; abounding very much in vowels, diphthongs, and polysyllables, which are esteemed the greateft excellencies of language. They will obferve alfo, with furprife, its great refemblance in the fubftance of it to modern Englifh; and that the far greateft part of the words of it are ftill in ufe, though many of them are much changed in their fpelling and meaning. The further gradual changes of this language will be traced, in their proper places, in the fubfequent volumes of this work.

“ of ducks;”—and in Scotland, “ a bearn-team,” a family of children.

(175) *Infargenes thefes*, which is moft commonly written in one word, was a technical term in the Anglo Saxon law, denoting a privilege granted by the king to a bifhop or thane, to try a thief in his own court, who had been *fanged* or caught within his own territories. *Spehnan Gloff. in voc.*

A minute

Minute investigation of the changes of dress not necessary.

A minute investigation of the several parts of the dress of both sexes, and of all the different ranks in society, in the several British nations, in this period, would be tedious, and inconsistent with the nature and design of history; and therefore a general view of this subject is all that can be expected in this place.

Dress not very liable to change in this period.

In the first stages of society, the modes and fashions of dress are not very changeable. Arts are then in their infancy, and do not furnish materials for fancy to work upon: and men being little accustomed to changes of any kind, are uncommonly tenacious of the fashions, as well as of the other customs of their ancestors. It is a sufficient proof of this, that the very ancient and barbarous practice of body-painting was not quite unfashionable in the present period, as there was a necessity for making a law against it A. D. 785 (176.) It appears also from the same law, that long after the introduction of Christianity, some Pagan modes of dress were still retained, that were much condemned by the church, but are not described.

Dress of the Scots, Brits, and Welsh.

We know of no very remarkable change in the dress of the Scots and Picts in this period; among whom the arts were still in a very imperfect state. The posterity of the ancient Britons of the south, after their retreat into Wales, were not in better circumstances in this respect, being but very imperfectly and coarsely clothed. They are said to have despised linen, and to have had their heads, feet and legs uncovered, with nothing on their bodies but coarse rough breeches, a kind of jacket next their skin, and a mantle or plaid over all, which served them to sleep in by night, and protected them from the cold and rain by day, as the learned reader will see by the rhiming verses below (177). This, however, was only the dress of the common people of Wales in this period: for it plainly appears from the laws of that country, that the royal family, the officers of state, and other persons of high rank, were not strangers to the use of linen, and of shoes and stockings. By these

(176) Wilkin, Concilia, t. i. p. 150.

(177) His vestium integralia	Sunt, sedet, subant, dormiunt,
Sunt, James et carolla,	Progunt, parant, prostant.
Et calces femoralia	In fine super tunicis,
Sil vestis et subplacis,	Sunt in super tunicis,
Quod est, in antea dora.	Vix aliter in dora.
Et illi apponant	Real feet occurrunt.
Sunt in dora,	Et in dora,



laws all the officers of the household were appointed to be clothed thrice every year, the king furnishing the woollen, and the queen the linen, cloth, for that purpose (178). The several parts of the dress of the king and of the nobility are enumerated; among which are shirts, stockings, shoes, and boots, with girdles or belts, at which their knives and daggers, with whetstones for sharpening them, were suspended (179). Though hose or stockings are mentioned in the ancient laws of Wales, we must not imagine that they were of the same kind, or manufactured in the same manner, with those which are now in use; for the ingenious and useful arts of knitting and weaving stockings were not invented till several centuries after the conclusion of this period. The stockings of those times were only certain clumsy coverings for the legs and feet, made of linen or woollen cloth, and wrapped about them, or fastened on them in several different ways; some of which will be hereafter mentioned.

The dress of the ancient Germans, as described by Tacitus, was very simple and imperfect, consisting chiefly of a large mantle or plaid, which covered the whole body, and was fastened on the right shoulder by a button or broach (180). Some of the most opulent amongst them wore under their mantles a kind of tunic, not loose and flowing like those of the Parthians and Sarmatians, but exactly fitted to the shape of their bodies, and ornamented with patches of the skins of animals of different colours. The dress of the women did not differ much from that of the men, only their mantles were commonly made of linen, and their tunics had no sleeves, and did not cover their bosoms (181). The Anglo-Saxons, at their arrival in Britain, seem to have been dressed in the same manner with their ancestors the ancient Germans. For Paulus Diaconus, in his history of the Longobards, gives the following short description of their dress (which he says was the same with that of the Anglo-Saxons), taken from a historical painting of the sixth century, which he had seen in the palace of Theodelinda, queen of the Longobards, in Italy. ‘ In the same place queen Theodelinda built a palace, in which she caused some of the exploits of

General  
description  
of the dress  
of the An-  
glo-Sax-  
ons.

(178) *Leges Walliæ*, p. 8.

(179) *Id.* p. 273.

(180) *Tacit. de Morib. German.* c. 17.

(181) *Id.* *ibid.*

‘ the Longobards to be painted. From this ancient painting, we see how the Longobards dressed their hair in those times, and also what kind of garments they wore. Their garments, which were the same with those of the Anglo-Saxons, were loose and flowing, and chiefly made of linen, adorned with broad borders, woven or embroidered with various colours (182).’ As this description was taken from a painting, it probably respects only the upper garment or mantle; and as this painting was in the palace of a queen, many female figures were probably introduced into it; which might be the reason that many of these mantles appeared to be of linen. For it is hardly possible, that all the garments of the men among the Longobards and Anglo-Saxons, especially the upper ones, could be made of linen, at a time when that kind of cloth was so scarce. Such garments too would have been very uncomfortable and inconvenient to nations that were so much exposed to storms, and engaged in military expeditions.

**More particular account.** To gratify more fully the curiosity of the people of England in this particular, it may not be improper to collect a more complete account of the several parts of the dress of their ancestors, and of the arts with which they used to adorn their persons.

**Fondness for the warm bath.** All the nations which issued from Germany and Scandinavia in the middle ages, and particularly the Anglo-Saxons and Danes, who settled in England, long retained their fondness for bathing in warm water, which they had derived from their ancestors the ancient Germans (183). In the Anglo-Saxon laws, the warm bath is always considered as one of the necessities of life; and no less indispensable than meat, drink, or cloathing (184). One of the most common penances enjoined by the canons of the church in those times, to those who had been guilty of great sins, was to abstain for a certain time from the warm bath themselves, and to give meat, drink, clothes, firing, bath, and bed, to a certain number of poor people (185). On the other hand, they had a very great aversion to bathing in cold water; which was also enjoined as a penance. To bathe at least

(182) Paul. Diacon. de Gestis Longobard. l. 4. c. 33.

(183) Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 22

(184) Johansen's Canons, A. D. 963. c. 68, 69. (185) Id. ibid. every

every Saturday was the constant practice of all who had any regard to personal propriety, and wished to recommend themselves to the favour of the ladies (186).

The Anglo-Saxons and Danes considered fine hair as one of the greatest beauties and ornaments of their persons, and were at no little pains in dressing it to advantage (187). Young ladies before marriage wore their hair uncovered and untied, flowing in ringlets over their shoulders; but as soon as they were married, they cut it shorter, tied it up, and put on a head-dress of some kind or other, according to the prevailing fashion (188). To have the hair entirely cut off, was so great a disgrace, that it was one of the greatest punishments inflicted on those women who were guilty of adultery (189). The Danish soldiers who were quartered upon the English, in the reigns of Edgar the Peaceable, and of Ethelred the Unready, were the beaux of those times, and were particularly attentive to the dressing of their hair; which they combed at least once every day, and thereby captivated the affections of the English ladies (190). The clergy, both secular and regular, were obliged to shave the crowns of their heads, and keep their hair short, which distinguished them from the laity; and several canons were made against their concealing their tonsure, or allowing their hair to grow long (191). The shape of this clerical tonsure was the subject of long and violent debates between the English clergy on the one hand, and those of the Scots and Picts on the other; that of the former being circular, and that of the latter only semicircular (192). It appears very plainly, that long flowing hair was universally esteemed a great ornament; and the tonsure of the clergy was considered as an act of mortification and self-denial, to which many of them submitted with reluctance, and endeavoured to conceal as much as possible. Some of them, who affected the reputation of superior sanctity, inveighed with great bitterness against

The Anglo-Saxons vain of fine and long hair.

(186) *Weltichindus*, l. i. *Cluver*, l. i. c. 16. p. 106.

(187) *J. Wallingford*, apud *Gale*, t. i. p. 547.

(188) *Du Cange Gloss. voc. Capelli*.

(189) *Tacit de Morib. German.* c. 19.

(190) *J. Wallingford*, apud *Gale*, p. 547.

(191) *Johnson's Canons*, A. D. 960, c. 47.

(192) *Be l. Hist. Eccles.* l. 5. c. 21.

the long hair of the laity; and laboured earnestly to persuade them to cut it short, in imitation of the clergy. Thus the famous St. Wulfstan, bishop of Worcester, who flourished in the last part of this period, is said to have declaimed with great vehemence against luxury of all kinds, but chiefly against long hair, as most criminal and most universal. 'The English (says William of Malmesbury, in his life of St. Wulfstan) were very vicious in their manners, and plunged in luxury, through the long peace which they had enjoyed in the reign of Edward the Confessor. The holy prelate Wulfstan reproved the wicked of all ranks with great boldness; but he rebuked those with the greatest severity who were proud of their long hair. When any of those vain people bowed their heads before him to receive his blessing, before he gave it, he cut a lock of their hair with a little sharp knife, which he carried about him for that purpose, and commanded them, by way of penance for their sins, to cut all the rest of their hair in the same manner. If any of them refused to comply with this command, he denounced the most dreadful judgments upon them, reproached them for their effeminacy, and foretold, that as they imitated women in the length of their hair, they would imitate them in their cowardice when their country was invaded; which was accomplished at the landing of the Normans (193).' In times of peace, the Anglo-Saxons and Danes covered their heads with a bonnet, exactly of the same shape with that which is still used by the common country-people in Scotland; in times of war, they covered them with their helmets (194).

Their  
beards.

Some of the ancient German nations allowed their beards to grow till they had killed an enemy in battle; while others shaved them all except their upper lips (195). The Anglo-Saxons, at their arrival in Britain, and for a considerable time after, most probably followed the former of these fashions, as well as their near neighbours the Longobards, to whom in all things they bore a very great resemblance (196). After the introduction of

(193) *Anglia Sacra*, t. 2. p. 254.

(194) See the portrait of the famous tapestry of Bayeux, *Mémoires de Littérature*, t. 12.

(195) Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 31. Diod. Sicul. l. c. c. 23.

(196) Paul Diacon. l. 1. c. 9.

Christianity,



Christianity, their clergy were obliged to shave their beards, in obedience to the laws, and in imitation of the practice of all the western churches (197). This distinction between the clergy and the laity subsisted for some time; and a writer of the seventh century complains, that the manners of the clergy were so corrupted, that they could not be distinguished from the laity by their actions, but only by their want of beards (198). By degrees, the English laity began to imitate the clergy so far as to shave all their beards except their upper lips, on each of which they left a lock of hair; by which they were distinguished from the French and Normans, who shaved their whole beards. The English spies who had been sent by king Harold to discover the strength and situation of the army of William duke of Normandy, having been taken prisoners, were conducted through the whole army, and desired to take a full view of every thing; after which they were sumptuously entertained, and courteously dismissed. ‘At their return (says Malmshury), ‘being asked by Harold, what they had seen? they ‘broke out into high encomiums on the magnificence, ‘confidence, and courtesy, of the duke; and seriously ‘added, that his whole army seemed to them to be ‘composed of priests, as all their beards, and even their ‘upper lips, were shaved. For the English at that time ‘generally shaved their beards; but allowed the hair of ‘their upper lips to grow to its full length. The king ‘smiled at their ignorance and simplicity; well knowing, ‘that those whom they believed to be priests were brave ‘warriors (199).’

The Anglo-Saxons, in this period, were far from being strangers to the use of linen;—for of this all persons of any consideration amongst them wore shirts next their bodies. These were esteemed so pleasant and so necessary, that wearing a woollen shirt is reckoned among those things which constituted deep satisfaction or penance for very great sins (200). In that particular description of the French dress (which was the same with the English), in the ninth century, given by Eginhart,

Their  
shirts.

(197) Muratori, t. 2. p. 300.

(198) Id. *ibid.*

(199) W. Malmsh. l. 3.

(200) Johnson's Canons, A. D. 963. Can. 64.

the historian of Charlemagne, a shirt of linen next the body is mentioned as an essential part (201).

Their tunics.

Above their shirts they wore a tunic or vest fitted to the shape of their bodies, and reaching to the middle of their thighs, sometimes with sleeves, and sometimes without them. Kings, princes, and great men, had their vests made of silk, or at least with borders of silk, embroidered with various figures (202). ‘The tunics’ (says Alcuinus) of soldiers are commonly made of linen, and exactly fitted to the shape of their bodies, that they may be expedite in pointing their spears, holding their shields, and brandishing their swords (203).’

Their breeches and belts.

The Anglo-Saxons wore breeches, either of linen or woollen cloth, reaching to the knee, and sometimes considerably below it, very much resembling trousers worn by our sailors (204). About their bodies, above their tunics, they wore belts or girdles, in which their swords were stuck almost perpendicular (205). These belts were sometimes embroidered, and adorned with precious stones (206).

Their stockings.

The common people among the Anglo-Saxons for the most part had no stockings, nor any other covering on their legs; and even the clergy celebrated mass with their legs naked, till the following law was made against that practice in the council of Chalchuythe, A. D. 785: ‘Let no minister of the altar presume to approach it to celebrate mass with naked legs, lest his filthiness appear, and God be offended (207).’ But persons of condition covered their legs with a kind of stockings made of linen or woollen cloth, which were sometimes fastened on, and made to fit the shape, by being wrapped about with bandages, which made many turns round the leg, from the foot to the knee (208). These bandages are very visible on the legs of Edward the Confessor, Guido count of Ponthieu, and a few other great personages in the famous tapestry of Bayeux, which is one of the most curious monuments of these times now remaining.

(201) Eginhart. Vita Caroli Magni, c. 23. (202) Id. ibid.

(203) Alcuini Lib. de Offic. Divin.

(204) See the plates of the tapestry of Bayeux, Montfaucon Monumens de Monarchie Française, t. 1.

(205) Id. ibid.

(206) W. Malmsb. l. 2. c. 6.

(207) Wilkins Council. t. 1. p. 147.

(208) Lindenbrogh Gloss. p. 1469.

Though many of the figures in this tapestry are without stockings, none of them are without shoes; which makes it probable, that shoes (as they are more necessary) were more generally used, than stockings, in this period. Many of our readers will be surpris'd to hear, that the greatest princes of Europe, in the ninth and tenth centuries, wore wooden shoes, which are now esteemed the marks of the most deplorable indigence and misery. Those of a great king are thus described by one who had seen them: 'The shoes which covered each of his feet are still remaining: their soles are of wood, and the upper part of leather, tied with thongs. They were so nicely fitted to the shape of the feet, that you might discern the order of the toes, terminating in a point at the great toe; so that the shoe of the right foot could not be put upon the left foot, nor that of the left on the right (209).'

The sagum or mantle was the principal garment of the ancient Germans, and of all the nations descended from them; particularly of the Franks and Anglo-Saxons (210). This garment is thus described by a contemporary writer: 'Their uppermost garment was a mantle of white or blue cloth, square, and lined, and so formed, that when it was put on their shoulders, it reached to their feet, before and behind; but hardly reached to their knees on the two sides (211).' These mantles were fastened on the right shoulder by a button; and were of great use to soldiers in military expeditions, protecting them from the inclemency of the weather, and keeping them warm both in the night and day. It was on this account that Charlemagne prohibited the use of short cloaks, which began to come into fashion in his time. 'Of what use (said that wise prince) are these trifling little cloaks? When we are in bed, they do not cover us; when we are on horseback, they do not protect us from the wind and rain; and when we retire to ease nature, they do not secure our legs from the cold and frost (212).' The mantles used by kings at their coronations, and on other great solemnities, were of purple cloth or silk, embroidered with gold.

(209) Eginhart, a Schminkio edit. p. 111.

(210) Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 17.

(211) Lindenbrogii Gloss. in voc. Sagum.

(212) Id. ibid.

' I give (said Witlaf king of Mercia, in his charter to the abbey of Croiland) to the secretary of the said abbey, my purple mantle, which I wore at my coronation, to be made into a cope to be used by those who minister at the holy altar; and also my golden vail, embroidered with the history of the siege of Troy, to be hung up in the church on my anniversary (213).<sup>a</sup> The mantles of princesses and ladies of distinction were made of silk or fine linen.

Distinctions between the dresses of the sexes.

There was little difference between the dresses of the two sexes among the ancient Germans; only the women made more use of linen than the men, the sleeves of their tunics were shorter, reaching no further than to their elbows; and their bosoms were uncovered when they had not on their mantles (214). The dresses of the two sexes among the Anglo-Saxons seem to have differed in some other particulars. The tunics of the ladies reached to their ancles;—their mantles were fastened before, and not on the right shoulder, with a button; they had openings on each side for the arms, and they flowed down to the ground on all sides. These circumstances appear very plainly by an attentive inspection of the female figures in the famous tapestry of Bayeux (215).

Ornaments of gold.

Persons of rank and wealth, of both sexes, among the Danes and Anglo-Saxons, seem to have been very fond of ornaments of gold; as gold chains and bracelets. Gold chains were worn by all officers of distinction, both civil and military, as badges of their offices; and these chains were given them by their sovereigns; who, on this account, are sometimes called the *givers of gold chains*, in the poems of those times (216). The famous present made by earl Godwin to king Hardicanute hath been already mentioned; and sufficiently shews, that bracelets of gold on each arm were ornaments worn by warriors, as well as by ladies, in this period (217). The Danes in particular were so great admirers of these ornaments, that they esteemed no oaths so sacred and inviolable as those that were sworn on bracelets of gold (218). In a word, we have the direct testimony of a cotempo-

(213) Ingolph. Hist. Croil. n. 488.

(214) Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 17.

(215) Memoires de l'Academie des Inscriptions, t. 12. p. 381.

442.

(216) Chron. Saxon. p. 112.

(217) See vol. ii.

(218) Aller. Vita Alfredi, p. 8. Ethelwerdi Chron. l. 4. c. 1.



rary writer, that, at the conclusion of this period, the English were admired by other nations, and even by the French, for the richness and elegance of their dress. 'The French and Norman nobility admired the fine persons, the flowing hair, and the beautiful dresses, of the English nobles. For the English women excel all others in needle-work, and embroidering with gold; and their male artists are also excellent. Besides this, such Germans as are most skilful in the several arts reside in England; and their merchants, who visit many distant regions with their ships, bring home from other countries the most curious works of art of every kind (219).'

Furs of various kinds were much used by persons of Furs. both sexes, and of all conditions, in lining their tunics and mantles, especially in the winter-season. Of this many proofs might be produced; but the following short anecdote from the life of Wulstan bishop of Worcester will be sufficient. The holy bishop is thus celebrated by his biographer for the modesty and humility of his dress: He avoided all appearances of pride and ostentation in his dress: for though he was very rich, he never made use of any finer furs than those of lambs skins in lining his garments. For this he was blamed one day in conversation by one of his brethren, Jeffrey bishop of Constans; who asked him, Why he used only the furs of lambs in his garments, when he might and ought to use those of fables, beavers, and foxes? To which he returned this facetious answer: It is very proper for you and other politicians, who are skilled in all the tricks and artifices of the world, to wear the spoils of those cunning animals; but as I am a plain and artless man, I am very well contented with the skins of lambs. The other still insisting, that if he would not use those finer furs, he might at least use the furs of cats. Believe me, replied Wulstan, my dear brother, *the lamb of God* is much oftener sung in the church than the cat of God. This witty answer threw the whole company into a violent fit of laughter, and put bishop Jeffrey to silence (220).' This anecdote, besides the purpose for which it is introduced, may serve as a specimen of the wit of those times.

(219) *Gesta Guillelmi Ducis*, apud Duclen. p. 211.

(220) *Anglia Sacra*, t. 2. p. 259.

Diet.

It is not necessary to spend much time in describing the diet of the several nations of Britain in this period. For these nations were not unpractised in the arts of hunting, hawking, fishing, pasturage, and agriculture; and consequently were not unprovided with the various kinds of meats and drinks which are procured by these arts.

Of the  
Welsh,  
Scots, and  
Picts,

The people of Wales, in this period, and even for some ages after, were very abstemious in their diet.

‘ They remain fasting from morning to night, being employed through the whole day in managing their affairs; and in the evening they take a moderate supper. If by any means they are disappointed of a supper, or get only a very slight one, they wait with patience till the succeeding evening, without taking any food. In the evening, when all the family and strangers are assembled, they make ready provisions according to the number of the guests and the abilities of the family; and in doing this they study only to satisfy the demands of nature, and not to provoke an appetite, by the arts of cookery, by sauces, and a variety of dishes. When the supper is ready, a basket with vegetables is set before every three persons, and not before every two, as in other countries,—a large dish with meat of various kinds, and sometimes a mess of broth or pottage. Their bread is thin and broad cakes, which are baked from day to day. They make no use of tables, tablecloths, or napkins. When strangers are at supper, the master and mistress of the house always serve them in person, and never taste any thing till their guests have finished their repast; that if there be any deficiency of provisions, it may fall to their own shares (221).’ This account is given by a Welshman, who was perfectly well acquainted with the manners and customs of his countrymen. It is highly probable, that the common people among the Scots and Picts, who were also descended from the ancient Britons, lived in the same manner in this period. It is proper, however, to take notice, that the people of rank and fortune, and particularly the princes of all these nations, lived in a more plentiful and less simple manner. The chief cooks of the king and queen were persons of considerable dignity in the courts of the kings of Wales, and made use of pepper, and other spice-

ries, in seasoning the dishes for the royal table, which appear to have been numerous (222). Two tables were daily covered in the king's hall: at the first of which the king presided, and ten of the principal officers of the court were admitted to it: the second table was in the lower part of the hall, near the door, at which the master of the household, with three other principal officers, had their seats. At this second table were several empty places, for the reception of such as were degraded from the king's table for their misbehaviour (223).

The ordinary drink of the common people in Scotland and Wales was water or milk; but persons of rank and fortune had a variety of fermented and intoxicating liquors, which they used with great freedom, and too often to excess. Mead was still one of their favourite liquors, and bore a high price; for a cask of mead, by the laws of Wales, was valued at one hundred and twenty pence, equal in quantity of silver to thirty shillings of our present money, and in efficacy to fifteen pounds (224). The dimensions of the cask are thus described by these laws: 'The measure of a cask of mead must be nine palms in height, and so capacious as to serve the king, accompanied by one of his counsellors, for a bathing tub (225).' By another law its diameter is fixed at eighteen palms. To provide the materials for making this liquor, every farmer, either of the king or of the nobility, was obliged to pay a part of his rent in honey (226). They had also two kinds of ale, called *common ale*, and *spiced ale*; and their value was ascertained by law: 'If a farmer hath no mead, he shall pay two casks of spiced ale, or four casks of common ale, for one cask of mead (227).' By this law, a cask of spiced ale, nine palms in height, and eighteen palms in diameter, was valued at a sum of money equal in efficacy to seven pounds ten shillings of our present money; and a cask of common ale, of the same dimensions, at a sum equal to three pounds fifteen shillings. This is a sufficient proof, that even common ale in this period was an article of luxury among the Welsh, which could only be obtained by the great and opulent. Wine seems to have been quite unknown even to the kings of

(222) *Leges Wallicæ*, p. 48. 55.(223) *Id.* p. 13, 14, 15.(224) *Id.* p. 178.(225) *Id.* *ibid.*(226) *Id.* p. 174.(227) *Id.* *ibid.*

Wales in this period, as it is not so much as once mentioned in their laws; though Giraldus Cambrensis, who flourished about a century after the conquest, acquaints us, that there was a vineyard, in his time, at Maenarper, near Pembroke, in South Wales (228).

Diet of the  
Anglo-  
Saxons  
and Danes.

The Anglo-Saxons and Danes were very far from being so abstemious in their diet as the posterity of the ancient Britons; but rather verged towards the other extreme. For instead of contenting themselves with one moderate meal a-day, they commonly took four full ones. Some of our monkish historians, who flourished after the conquest, speak with high relish of the good living at court in the Saxon and Danish times. ‘The kings (as it is said) were then so generous and bountiful, that they commanded four royal banquets to be served up every day to all their courtiers; chusing rather to have much superfluity at their tables, than the least appearance of deficiency. But, alas! it is become the custom at court in our times to have only one entertainment a-day; out of politeness, as it is pretended, but in reality out of sordid parsimony (229).’ The Anglo-Saxons and Danes, like their ancestors the ancient Germans, delighted much in feasting (230). Their nobles spent the greatest part of their revenues in making provision for the abundant and frequent feasts with which they regaled their friends and followers (231). Their kings entertained all the great men of the kingdom for several days at each of the three festivals of Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide, in the most sumptuous manner, and at a great expence (232). In a word, no meeting of any kind was held, and no business of importance was transacted, without a feast. These feasts were more remarkable for their abundance than for their elegance; and some kinds of provisions were then used which would not now be touched, but in the greatest extremities of famine. The Danish inhabitants of Northumberland, in particular, were fond of horse-flesh, which they devoured in great quantities (233).

(228) Girald. Cambrenf. *Itinerarium Cambriae*, l. 1. c. 12.

(229) Hen. Hunt. l. 6.

(230) Tacit. *de Morib. German.* c. 14, 15.

(231) W. Malmf. l. 3. p. 8. (232) *Anglia Sacra*, t. 2. p. 199.

(233) Wilkins *Concilia*, t. 1. p. 147, 151.



The cookery of the English in this period, we may presume, was not very exquisite. It seems to have consisted chiefly, if not wholly, in the three operations of roasting, broiling, and boiling. The ancient Germans, and all the nations descended from them, delighted much in great joints of roasted meat; a taste which universally prevailed among the Anglo-Saxons of this period, and still prevails among the most robust and manly of their posterity (234). Salted meats of all kinds were much used in those times at the tables of the great, and even at royal entertainments (235).

Their  
cookery.

As the Anglo-Saxons and Danes were at least as much addicted to intemperance in drinking as in eating, they were at much pains in providing plenty and variety of liquors for their entertainments. The liquors provided for a royal banquet, in the reign of Edward the Confessor, were wine, mead, ale, pigment, morat, and cyder (236). If wine was made in England in this period, it was only in small quantities; and therefore the greatest part of what was used was certainly imported. 'Though Britain (says an ancient historian) abounds in so many things, it produceth but little wine, that those who desire to purchase her commodities may have some thing to give in exchange for them (237).' Wine, therefore, we may conclude, was both scarce and dear in Britain in this period, when trade was in its infancy. Mead was also one of the luxuries of life, and could only be procured by persons of considerable opulence. Ale was the favourite liquor of the Anglo-Saxons and Danes, as it had been of their ancestors the ancient Germans (238). Before their conversion to Christianity, they believed that drinking large and frequent draughts of ale was one of the chief felicities which those heroes enjoyed who were admitted into the hall of Odin (139): a sufficient proof of the high relish which these nations had for that liquor. This relish they retained to the end of this period; and it is still retained by many of their posterity. Pigment (in Latin *pigmentum*) was one of the

Their li-  
quors,  
wine,  
mead, ale,  
pigment,  
morat,  
cyder, &c.

(234) Athenæi Deipnosoph. l. 4. c. 13. Eginhart. a Schminkio edit. p. 113.

(235) Hen. Hunt. l. 6. p. 210.

(236) Id. ibid.

(237) Id. l. 1. p. 171.

(238) Tacit. de Morib. German. c. 23.

(239) Bartholin. de Causis Contemptæ apud Danos Mortis, l. 2. c. 12. p. 541. 558.

richest and most delicious liquors known in those times ; and so greatly admired both in England and on the continent, that it was commonly called *nectar*. It is thus described by an ancient author :—‘ Pigment is a sweet ‘ and odoriferous liquor, made of honey, wine, and spices of various kinds (240).’ Morat was also esteemed a delicacy, and was only found at the tables of the great. It was made of honey, diluted with the juice of mulberries (241). Cyder is so well known, that it need not be described. Some other liquors are occasionally mentioned in the monuments of this period ; but it is not necessary to make this enumeration more complete (242).

Manner of  
sitting at  
table.

Among the ancient Germans every guest had a separate seat, and a little table by himself ; but their posterity the Anglo-Saxons and Danes of this period were seated on long benches, at large square tables (243). This appears from many passages in their history, and from the figure of the table at which Harold and his friends are represented dining in the tapestry of Bayeux (244). The guests were not permitted to take their places on these benches according to their own fancies, but according to an arrangement that was exactly settled and strictly observed. By the court laws of king Canute, the officers of his household, and all the nobility who dined at court, are commanded to take their places at table according to their rank, and those of the same rank according to their seniority in office ; and if any one presumed to take too high a place, he was degraded to the lowest, and all the company were permitted to pelt him with bones, without being thought guilty of any rudeness, or liable to any challenge (245). By the laws of Wales, which were probably copied in this particular from some Anglo-Saxon laws that are now lost, the places of all the great officers who were admitted to the

(240) Joan. de Janua, *Catholicum Parvum*, apud Du Cange, t. 5. p. 471.

(241) Du Cange *Gloss. in voc. Moratum*.

(242) *Anglia Sacra*, t. 2. p. 98.

(243) *Tacit. de Morib. German.* c. 22.

(244) *Montfaucon Monumens de la Monarchie Française*, t. 1. plate 35. p. 372.

(245) *Leges Curiales Regis Canuti*, apud Bartholin. p. 533.

royal table are ascertained with the most minute exactness (246).

As persons of rank and fortune among the Anglo-Saxons and Danes never engaged in business, and could not amuse themselves with reading, they necessarily spent much of their time in diversions. These were of three kinds, viz.—martial exercises,—the sports of the field, —and domestic amusements.

War being the chief employment and great delight of the Anglo-Saxon thanes, and their retainers, many of the diversions of their youth, and even of their riper years, were of a martial cast, consisting of running, swimming, leaping, riding, wrestling and fighting (247). A young warrior thus recounts the exercises in which he had acquired dexterity by constant practice: ‘ I fight valiantly; I sit firmly on horseback; I am inured to swimming; I know how to run along on scates; I dart the lance; and am skilful at the oar (248).’ The martial dance was the favourite diversion of the ancient Germans, and of their descendants the Anglo-Saxons. It is thus described by Tacitus: ‘ They have one public diversion which is constantly exhibited at all their meetings. Young men, who by frequent exercise have attained to great perfection in this pastime, strip themselves, and dance among the points of swords and spears with the most wonderful agility, and even with the most elegant and graceful motions. These young gentlemen do not perform this martial dance for hire, but for the entertainment of the spectators, whose applause they esteem a sufficient reward (249).’ In a word, the ancient inhabitants of Germany and Scandinavia, and the nations descended from them, delighted so much in these martial exercises, that they imagined they constituted the chief amusement and felicity of those heroes who were admitted into Valhalla, the place of future happiness. ‘ Tell me (says Gangler), how do the heroes divert themselves when they are not engaged in drinking?’ ‘ Every day (replies Har), as soon as they have dressed themselves, they take their arms, and entering the lists, fight till they cut one another in pieces. This is their diversion. But no

(246) *Leges Wallice*, l. i. passim.

(247) *Northern Antiquities*, t. i. p. 197.

(248) *Id. ibid.* p. 238. (249) *Tacit. de Morib. German.* c. 24.

‘ sooner does the hour of repast approach, than they  
 ‘ remount their horses, all safe and sound, and return  
 ‘ to drink in the palace of Odin (250).’ Such readers  
 as desire to see a very prolix description of the military  
 dances and other martial diversions of the ancient Danes,  
 Anglo-Saxons, and other nations of Europe, in this  
 period, may consult the works quoted below (251). It  
 was from these martial diversions that the tournaments  
 of the middle ages, which will be delineated in our  
 third volume, derived their origin. Horse-races may be  
 reckoned one of the diversions of the English in this  
 period. Among the magnificent presents that were  
 made to king Athelstan, by Adulphus, ambassador of  
 Hugh king of France, when he demanded his sister the  
 princess Edelswitha for his master, we are told,—‘ there  
 ‘ were several running-horses, with their saddles, and  
 ‘ bits of yellow gold in their mouths (252).’ This is a  
 sufficient proof, that such horses were admired and used  
 in England at that time.

Sports of  
 the field.

The sports of the field were the favourite diversions  
 of the Anglo-Saxons, Danes, and other British nations, in  
 this period; and in these sports persons of rank and for-  
 tune spent the greatest part of their time when they  
 were not engaged in war. Such rural diversions were  
 admirably adapted to give delight to a people of great  
 activity and spirit, who enjoyed much leisure, and lived  
 constantly in an open country, abounding in game of all  
 kinds, which seemed to solicit their pursuit. Accordingly  
 they considered hawking and hunting as the two principal  
 branches of a royal and noble education, the most ad-  
 mired accomplishments, and most honourable employ-  
 ments, of kings and princes. Alfred the Great was  
 taught to hunt before he was taught to read; and his  
 friend and historian Asser speaks of his superior skill in  
 all the sports of the field in a kind of rapture: ‘ Before  
 ‘ he was twelve years of age, he was a most expert and  
 ‘ active hunter, and excelled in all the branches of that  
 ‘ most noble art, to which he applied with incessant la-  
 ‘ bour and amazing success. For his felicity in hunt-  
 ‘ ing, as well as in all other gifts of God, was really

(250) Bartholin. p. 564.

(251) *Historia Olai Magni*, l. 15. p. 573—595. Muratori,  
 t. 2. *Dissertat.* 29.

(252) *W. Malm.* l. 2. c. 6.



‘incomparable, as I myself have often seen (253).’ Edward the Confessor’s fondness for these exercises of hunting and hawking is thus described by his historian: ‘There was only one diversion in which he took the greatest possible delight, viz. to follow a pack of swift hounds in pursuit of their game, and to cheer them with his voice, or to attend the flights of hawks taught to pursue and catch their kindred birds. Every day, after divine service, he took the field, and spent his time in these beloved sports (254).’ The figure of a hawk upon the left hand was the mark by which the painters of those times distinguished persons of high rank, of both sexes, from their inferiors; which is a sufficient proof, that their fondness for, and frequent use of that bird, was universally known (255). So great a value did the princes and nobility of Europe in this period set upon their hawks, that they constantly carried them with them in all their journies, and sometimes into battle, and would not part with them even to procure their own liberty, when they were taken prisoners (256). The truth is, to resign his hawk was one of the most dishonourable actions of which a nobleman could be guilty, and was considered as a voluntary resignation of his nobility. Dogs of sport of all kinds were also the favourites and constant companions of the great in this period; and a prodigious number of laws were made to prevent their being killed or stolen (257).

When kings, princes, and nobles, took so much de- Game laws.  
light in the diversions of the field, we may be almost certain, that they endeavoured to secure to themselves, and to prevent their inferiors from sharing with them in the pleasure of those admired amusements. Of this we have the clearest evidence in the forest or game laws of Canute the Great, which are still extant. By these laws, certain magistrates or judges are appointed in every county, to take cognisance of all trespasses committed within the limits of the royal forests; and certain inferior officers or game-keepers are constituted to apprehend those who

(253) *Aster. Vita Ælfredi*, a Camden. edit. p. 5.

(254) *W. Malmf. l. 2. c. 13.*

(255) *Memoires des Inscriptions*, t. 9. p. 542.

(256) *Id. ibid.*

(257) *Lindenbrog. p. 384, 385-435, 436. Leges Wallicæ, p. 249, &c.*

were guilty of such trespasses. Thanes, bishops, and abbots, are permitted to hunt in the king's chaces; but the penalties and punishments inflicted on unqualified persons who were guilty of hunting, or even disturbing the game, are very severe. By one of these laws, if a gentleman, or inferior thane, killed a stag in a royal forest, he was degraded, and deprived of his arms; if a ceorl killed one, he was reduced to slavery; and if a slave killed one, he was put to death. By another of these laws, all proprietors of lands are declared to have a right to hunt within their own lands; but not to pursue their game into any of the royal chaces (258).

Domestic  
games.

Though the martial and rural sports above described enabled the kings, princes, and nobles, of this period, to spend a considerable part of their time in a very agreeable manner; yet as these sports could only be pursued in the day-time, in favourable weather, and when they were in health, they stood in need of some domestic diversions to fill up the remainder of their vacant hours. These domestic diversions were the more necessary, because very few were then capable of amusing themselves with reading, writing, and study; and because they were not furnished with various topics of conversation, —with public spectacles,—and with other ingenious arts of killing time, which have been since invented. It was probably such circumstances as these that rendered the ancient Germans, the ancestors of the Anglo-Saxons, so immoderately fond of games of chance. ‘At dice they play, which is wonderful, when they are perfectly cool and sober, with such keenness and temerity, that after they have lost all their money and goods, they venture their very persons and liberties on one desperate throw. He who loseth tamely submits to servitude; and though both younger and stronger than his antagonist, patiently permits himself to be bound, and sold in the market. This madness they dignify with the name of *honour* (259).’ We have good reason to believe, that similar circumstances produced similar effects in their descendants the Anglo-Saxons in England in this period, though not perhaps in such an extreme degree; because the church discouraged games

(258) *Constitutiones Canuti Regis de Foresta*, apud Spelman. *Gloss* p. 140, 141, 142. *Wilkins Leges Saxon.* p. 146.

(259) *Tacit. de Morib. German.* c. 24.

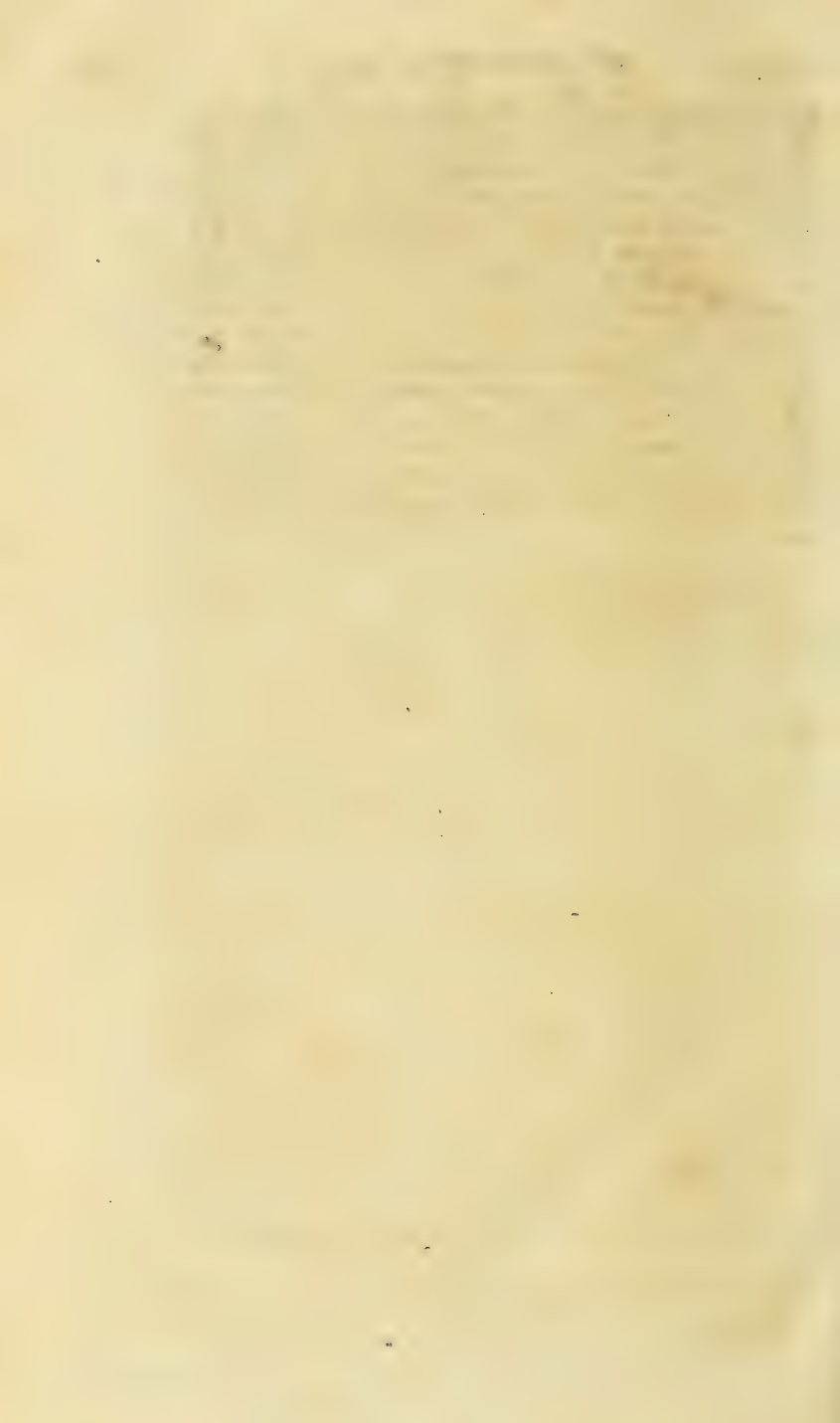
of chance, and prohibited the use of them to the clergy (260). When bishop Ætheric obtained admission to Canute the Great about midnight, upon some urgent business, he found the king and his courtiers engaged at play, some at dice, and others at chess (261). When a young nobleman applied to a father for permission to pay his addresses to his daughter, the parent, it is said, commonly made a trial of his temper, by playing with him at dice and chess, before he gave him an answer (262). The game of backgammon, it is pretended, was invented in Wales in this period, and derives its name from the two Welsh words, *bach*, ‘little,’ and *cammon*, ‘battle’ (268). But it is quite unnecessary to be more particular in our enumeration of these domestic amusements, of which many are probably quite forgotten and lost.

(260) Johnson's Canons, A. D. 960. can. 64.

(261) Hist. Ramsienf. a Gale edit. c. 85.

(262) Hist. Olai Magni, p. 572.

(263) Glott. ad Leges Wallicas, a voc. Tawlbwrdd.





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# A P P E N D I X

TO THE

## S E C O N D B O O K.

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### N U M B E R I.

The Saxon names of places, in alphabetical order, with an explanation of their meaning, and their present English names\*.

<i>Saxon Names.</i>	<i>Meaning†.</i>	<i>English Names.</i>
A		
Abban-dun	Abbey-hill	Abingdon, Berks
Ace-man's-ceaster	Sick-man's-city	Bath, Somersetsh.
Ac-lea	Oak-field	Okeley, Surrey
Acsan-minster	Ax-abbey	Axminster, Devon
Ædwines-clife	Edwin's rock	Not certainly known
Ægeles-byrig	Egel's-town	Ailesbury, Bucks
Ægeles-ford	Egel's-ford	Ailesford, Kent
Ægles-wurthe	Egel's-worth	Eclefworth, Northampt.
Ælfet-ée	Elfet's island	Not certainly known

\* I once intended to have subjoined a commentary to this alphabetical catalogue of the names of places, explaining the reasons of the meanings given to these names, and producing authorities in support of these reasons; but this became so voluminous, that it could not be inserted.

† When the meaning is unknown or uncertain, the original word is put in this column.

<i>Saxon Names.</i>	<i>Meaning.</i>	<i>English Names.</i>
<b>A</b>		
Ælm	Elm	Elm, in Ely
Ælscet-don	Ash-hill	Aston, Berks
Ælsc-tun	Ash-town	Ashton, Northampt.
Ælft-fild	East-field	East-field, Northampt.
Ælft-tun	East-town	Easton, Northampt.
Æteling-stoce	Etling's-stock	Tavistock, Devon
Æthan-dun	Ethan's hill	Eddington, Wiltsh.
Æthelbrihte's-minster	Ethelbert's church	In Hereford
Æthelhung-igland	Ethelhun's island	Not known
Æthelinga-dene	Nobles'-valley	Alton, Hampsh.
Æthelinga-igge	Nobles'-island	Athelney, Somersetsh.
Æfene	Avon	Avon-river
Æfene-muth	Avon-mouth	Avon's-mouth
S. Albane	St. Alban	St. Alban's, Hertfordsh.
Aldewingle	Old winkle	Oldwinkle, Northampt.
Ambresbyri	Amber's town	Amberbury, Wiltsh.
Ancar-ig	Hermit's-island	Thorney-isle, Cambridgh.
Andefira	Andefira	Andover, Hampsh.
Andredes-leag	Andred's-pasture	The Weald, Kent
Andred-ceaster	Andred's-city	Not certainly known
Angel-cynnes-lond	Angles-nation-land	England
Angles-ege	Angles-island	Anglesey
Apuldre	The Sea-marsh	Appledore, Kent
Arundel	Arundel	Arundel, Suffex
Arwan	Arwan	River Orwel
Affandun	Afs-hill	Affington, Essex
S. Augustine's-minster	St. Augustine's-church	St. Austin's, Canterbury
<b>B</b>		
Baccanceld	Baccanceld	Beckenham, Kent
Baddan-byrig	Baddan's-town	Badbury, Dorsetsh.
Badecan-willa	Badecan's-well	Bakewell, Derbysh.
Barwe	Barwe	Barrow, Rutlandsh.
Basing	A mantle	Basing, Hampsh.
Bathan-cester	Bathing city	Bath, Somersetsh.
Beam-dune	Beam-hill	Bampton, Devonsh.
Beam-fleet	Beam-bay	Bemfleet, Essex
Bearthanig	Bearthanig	Bardney, Lincolnsh.
Bearwreolfeire	Box-division	Berkshire
Bebbanburh	Bebba's-town	Bamburgh, Northumberland
Bedan-ford	Bedan's-ford	Bedford
Bedan-ford-feire	Bedan's-ford-division	Bedfordshire
Bedan-heatde	Bedan's head	Bedwin, Wiltsh.
Benetica	Benetica	A river in Hertfordsh.
Benning-tun	Benning's-town	Bennington, Hertfordsh.

<i>Saxon Names.</i>	<i>Meaning.</i>	<i>English Names.</i>
Beofer-lic	Beaver-like	Beverly, Yorksh.
Beorc-lea	Birch-field	Barkley, Gloucestersh.
Beorg-ford	Hill-ford	Burford, Oxfordsh.
Beornicas	People of Bernicia	Bernicians, or Northumbrians
Beran-byrig	Beran-town	Banbury, Oxfordsh.
Bolhithe-goat	Bolhithe's-gate	Bulldikegate, Peterborow
Bosenham	Wood-house	Bosham, Suffex
Bradán-æ	Broad-river	Not known, Cambridge sh.
Bradán-relic	Broad-island	Stepholme, in the Severn
Bradán-ford	Broad-ford	Bradford, Wiltsh.
Bricenan-mere	Bricenan's-pool	Bricknockmere, near Bricknock.
Brædine	Broad-valley	Bredon-forest, Wiltsh.
Brent-ford	Brent-ford	Brentford, Middlesex
Breodune	Bread-hill	Not known
Breodun	Bread-hill	Breidon, Worcestersh.
Briten-lond	Briton's-land	Britain
Brig-stow	Bridge-place	Bristol
Brigge	Bridge	Bridgenorth, Shropsh.
Brunanburh	Brown-town	Uncertain
Buccingham	Beech-tree-town	Buckingham
Buccingham-scire	Beech-tree-town divisi.	Buckinghamshire
Burg	Town or city	Peterburgh, Northamptonsh.
Burnewudu	Burnt-wood	Bernwood-forest, Bucks
Butting-tun	Near-river-town	Buttington, Shropsh.
Byferes-stan	Beavers-stone	Beverston, Gloucestersh.
Byrtune	Bear-town	Burton, Staffordsh.

## C

Cære	Care	Carehouse, Northumb.
Calne	Calne	Calne, Wiltsh.
Caninganmerfes	Caningans-marshes	Canington, Somersetsh.
Cant-wara-burh	Kentishmen's-town	Canterbury
Carleol	Carleol	Carlisle, Cumberland
Carrum	Carrum	Charmouth, Dorsetsh.
Castra	Camp	Castor, Northamptonsh.
Cealc-hythe	Chalk-port	Uncertain
Ceaſter	Camp	West-Chester
Cent	Cent	Kent
Ceorls-ige	Ceorls-island	Chertsey Surry
Cerdices-ford	Cerdic's-ford	Charford, Hampsh.
Cerdices-leag	Cerdic's-field	Chardley, Buckinghamsh.
Cerdiceſora	Cerdic's-shore	Charmouth, Dorsetsh.
Cice	Chich	St. Oſythe, Eſſex
Cingestun	Kings-town	Kingſton, Surry
Ciſſaceafter	Ciſſa's-city	Chicheſter, Suffex

<i>Saxon Names.</i>	<i>Meaning.</i>	<i>English Names.</i>
Cleuceafter	Clew-city	Gloucester
Cleftun	Cliff's-town	Clifton, Dorsetsh.
Clitern	Clitern	Chilternhills, Oxfordsh.
Clive	Cliff	Clyff, Northamptonsh.
Cloveshooh	Cloveshoe	Abingdon, Berkshire
Colne	Colne	River Colne, Essex
Colneceafter	Colne-city	Colchester, Essex
Coludesburh	Coluds-city	Coldingham, Merse
Corfe's geate	Corf's-gate	Corsecastle, Purbecke
Cosham	Choice-house	Cosham, Wiltsh.
Costerford	Tempter's-ford	Cosford, Warwicksh.
Cottingham	Cotings-house	Cottingham, Northamptonsh.
Couentre	Couentre	Coventry, Warwickshire
Cræcelade	Creek's-stream	Creeklade, Wiltsh.
Crecianford	Creek's-ford	Crayford, Kent
Crediantun	Credy-town	Kirton, Devonsh.
Croyland	Croyland	Crowland, Lincolnsh.
Cumbrolond	Cumbre's-country	Cumberland
Cevichelmes-hleawe	Cuehelm's-mount	Cuckamsley-hill, Berks
Cymenes-ora	Cymen's shore	Cimentshore, Sussex
Cynemæresford	King's-famous-ford	Kempford, Gloucestersh.
Cynet	Kenet	Kenet, Wiltsh.
Cyninges clife	King's-cliff	Unknown, Northumb.
Cypanham	Merchant-town	Chippenham, Wiltsh.
Cyrenceafter	Cere's-city	Cerencester, Gloucestersh.
Cyricbyrig	Church-town	Cherbury, Shropsh.

## D

Dæg-stan	Degfa's-stone	Dawston, Cumberland
S. David	St. David's	St. David's, Pembrokesth.
Deoraby	Deer's-place	Derby
Deorham	Deer's-home	Durham, Gloucestersh.
Derawuda	Deer's-wood	Beverly, Yorksh.
Dodesthorp	Dod's-farm	Dostroy, Northamptonsh.
Domuc	Domuc	Dunwich, Suffolk
Doreceafter	Water-city	Dorchester, Oxfordsh.
Driffelda	Dry-field	Driffield, Yorksh.
Dunstaple	Hill-staple	Dunstable, Bedfordsh.
Dunholdm	Hill and valley	Durham

## E

Eadesbyrig	Eades-town	Eddesbury, Chesh.
Edmundesbyrig	Edmunds-town	Bury, Suffolk
Eadulfes-næsse	Eadulf's-point	Nets, Essex
East-Engle	East England	Cambridgeh. Suffolk, Norfolk

Eas-



<i>Saxon Names.</i>	<i>Meaning.</i>	<i>English Names.</i>
East-Seaxe	East-Saxony	Essex, &c.
Egbrightes-stan	Egbright's-stone	Brixton, Wiltsh.
Ege	The eye	Eye, Northamptonsh.
Egonesham	Egon's-home	Ensham, Oxfordsh.
Ellendun	Strong-hill	Wilton, Wiltsh.
Elig	Ecl-ille	Ely
Englafilda	English-field	Inglefield, Berks
Englaland	English-land	England
Eofer-wic	Urie-castle	York
Efendic	Efen's-dike	Assendike, Cambridgesh.
Eftun	East-town	Easton, Leicestersh.
Evesham	Eves's-home	Evesham, Worcestersh.
Exan-ccaester	Ex-city	Exeter, Devonsh.
Exan-muth	Ex-mouth	Exmouth, Devonsh.

## F

Fauresfeld	Fore-field	Feverham, Kent
Fearndun	Fern-hill	Farrington, Berks
Fearnham	Fern-place	Farnham, Surrey
Fethanleag	Army-field	Frithern, Gloucestersh.
Fenchamstede	Fincham's-stead	Finchamsted, Berks
Folces-stan	People's-stone	Folkston, Kent
Fromuth	Froom-mouth	Pool, Dorsetsh.
Fullanham	Foul-town	Fulham, Middlesex

## G

Gaful-ford	Toll-ford	Camelford, Cornwall
Gegnesburh	Tribe's-town	Gainfburrow, Lincolnsh.
Gildeneburgh	Gilded-town	Peterburrow
Gillingaham	Gillings-home	Gillingham, Dorsetsh.
Glastringbyri	Glat's-town	Glassenbury, Somersetsh.
Grantebrige	Grant's-bridge	Cambridge
Grena-wic	Green-town	Greenwich, Kent
Gypes-wich	Gipping's-town	Ipswich, Suffolk

## H

Hefe	High	Hiefild
Heftingas	Danish-town	Hastings, Suffex
Hagustalde/ham	Hestild-town	Hexham, Northumb.
Ham-tun	Home-town	Northampton, Southampton
Hamtun-syre	Home-town-division	Hampshire
Heamstide	Home-stede	Hampsted, Berks
Hean-byrig	Poor-town	Swineshead, Hunt.
Heat-fild	Hot-field	Hatfield, Hertfordsh.
Hengestefildun	Hengist's-hill	Hengstonhill, Cornw.

Heort-

<i>Saxon Names.</i>	<i>Meaning.</i>	<i>English Names.</i>
Heort-ford	Hart's-ford	Hertford
Heortford-scyre	Hart's-ford-division	Hertfordsh.
Here-ford	Army's-ford	Hereford
Hereford-scyre	Army's-ford-division	Herefordsh.
Hothfeld	High-field	Hatfield, Yorksh.
Hlida-ford	Lid's-ford	Lidford, Devonsh.
Hocneratun	Hocneratown	Hogsnorton, Oxfordsh.
Hreopan-dun	Crying-hill	Repton, Derbysh.
Hrippun	Harvest-town	Rippon, Yorksh.
Hrofes-ceaster	Covered-castle	Rochester, Kent
Hufiber	Humber	River Humber
Hundhoge	Hounds-house	Huncot, Leicestersh.
Huntendune	Hunters-downs	Huntington
Huntendunescyre	Hunters-down-divisi.	Huntingtonsh.
Hweallæge	Whale-isle	Whaley, Lancashire
Hwerewille	Whirl-well	Whorwell, Hampsh.
Hwit-cerc	White-church	White-church, Hampsh.
Hwiterne	White-place	Whitern, Gallaway
Hyrtingberi	Farmers-town	Irlington, Northampt.
Hythe	Haven	Hyth, Kent

## I

Icanhoe	Icanhoe	Boston, Lincolnsh.
Idle	Empty	Rivulet Idle, Nottinghamsh.
Iglea	Island-field	Unknown
Ircingafild	Ircing's-field	Archinfield, Herefordsh.

## K

Ketering	Ketering	Kettering, Northampt.
Kyntlingtun	Kyntling's-town	Kirtlington, Oxfordsh.

## L

Lambhythe	Clay-haven	Lambeth, Surry
Lægeceaster	Legion-city	Well-Cetter
Legerceaster	Leire-city	Leicester
Lægreceaster-scyre	Leire-city-division	Leicestershire
Licetild	Corps-field	Litchfield, Staffordsh.
Liga	Liga	The river Lea
Ligtun	Lame-town	Leighton, Bedfordsh.
Limenemuth	Lime-mouth	Lime, Kent
Lincolne	Lake-colony	Lincoln
Lincolnescyre	Lake-colony-division	Lincolnshire
Lindesfarna-ea	Lind-people's-isle	Holy-island
Lindesige	Marsh-isle	Lindsey, Lincolnsh.
Lothene	Army-province	Lothian, Scotland

Lundine

<i>Saxon Names.</i>	<i>Meaning.</i>	<i>English Names.</i>
Lundine Legeanburh	Lundine Lea-town	London Leighton, Bedfordsh.
M		
Mældun Mænige Mærlbeorge Malveifin Manigceafter Maferhild Mealdelmefbyrig Medefhamftele Medigwæg Merantun Merefige Michaelftow Middel-Anglas Middel-Seaxe Middel-tun Muntgumni	Crofs-hill Man-ifland Marle-town Bad-neighbour Many-castle Merchant-field Maildelm's town Whirlepool-place Fair-river Mire town March-ifland Michael's-place Middle-English Middle-Saxony Middle-town Gomer's-mount	Maldon, Effex Anglefey Marlborough, Wiltsh. Bamborow-castle Manchester, Lancash. Ofwiftre, Shropsh. Malmubury, Wiltsh. Peterburg, Northamptonsh. River Medway Merton, Surry Marfey, Effex St. Michael's-mount, Cornw. Warwicksh Staffordsh. &c. Middlefex Middleton, Effex Montgomery
N		
Næffe Natanleag Nen S. Neod Northburh North folc Northampton North-muth Northan-hymbras Northan-hymbra-land North-wealas North-wic	The Point Natan's-field Nen St. Neot's North-town North-people North-home-town North-mouth North-humbrians North-humber-land North-Welfh North-castle	Nefs-point, Kent Natly, Hampsh. River Nen, Northampt. St. Neot's, Huntingdonsh. Norbury, Northampt. Norfolk Northampton Buoy in the Nore Northumbrians Northumberland People of North-Wales Norwich
O		
Glan-eye Ottan-ford Oxnaford Oxnafordfcyre	Olan's-ifland Ottan's-ford Oxen's-ford Oxen's-ford-division	Olney Orford, Kent Oxford Oxfordshire
P		
Paffanham Pafun Peaclond	Paffan's-home Pafs-town Peak-land	Pafham, Northampt. Pafton, Northampt. The Peak, Derbysh.
		Pedridan

<i>Saxon Names.</i>	<i>Meaning.</i>	<i>English Names.</i>
Pedridan	Pedridan	Parret-river, Somersetsh.
Pen-wight-street	Head-island-point	The Land's-end, Cornw.
Peonho	Head-heel	Pen, Somersetsh.
Pevensea	Peven-sea	Pemsey, Suffex
Perfeora	Pers-shore	Perthore, Worcestersh.
Pencanheal	Pencan's-hill	Finkley, Durham
Port	The Port	Portland, Dorsetsh.
Porteloca	Harbour-bar	Portlock-bay, Somersetsh.
Portsmouth	Harbour's-mouth	Portsmouth, Hampsh.
Possentebyrig	Possent's-town	Pontesbury, Shropsh.
Pruutesflood	Privet's-flood	Prevot, Hampsh.

## R

Raculf	Roe's-cliff	Reculver, Kent
Reading	Flint-meadows	Reading, Berksh.
Rihala	Rough-hall	Ryall, Rutlandsh.
Rogingham	Roging's-home	Rockingham, Northampt.
Rugenore	Rugged-shore	Rowner, Hampsh.
Rumcoka	Roomy-cave	Runkhorn, Chesh.
Rumen-ea	Spacious-sea	Rumney, Kent
Rumefige	Roomy-island	Rumsey, Hampsh.

## S

Sæferne	Sea-flowing	River Severn
Sandwic	Sandy-port	Sandwich, Kent
Scaetfebyrig	Shaft's-town	Shaftesbury, Dorsetsh.
Sceapige	Sheep's-island	Sheppey, Kent
Sceobyrg	Shoe-town	Shobery, Essex
Sceraburn	Clear-burn	Sherburn, Dorsetsh.
Scotland	Scotch-land	Scotland
Scrobbebyrig	Shrub-town	Shroesbury
Sealwudu	Willow-wood	Selwood, Somersetsh.
Searbyrig	Sharp-river-town	Salisbury, Wiltsh.
Sec-candun	Battle-hill	Seckington, Warwicksh.
Seletun	Seal-town	Silton, Yorksh.
Sempigaham	Sempiga's-home	Sempringham, Lincolnsh.
Sliowatord	Sliowa's-ford	Sleaford, Lincolnsh.
Snawdun	Snow-hill	Snowdon-hills
Snotingham	Cave-town	Nottingham
Snotingham-scyre	Cave-town-division	Nottinghamshire
Soccabyrig	Soke-town	Sockburn, Durham
Stæfford	Staff-ford	Stafford
Stæfford-scyre	Staff-ford-division	Staffordshire
Stane	Stone	Stains, Middlesex
Stanford	Stone-ford	Stamford, Lincolnsh.

Stan-



<i>Saxon Names.</i>	<i>Meaning.</i>	<i>English Names.</i>
Stanfordesbryege	Stone-ford-bridge	Stamford-bridge
Stanwic	Stone-town	Stanwix, Northampt.
Streonheale	Beacon-bay	Whitby, Yorksh.
Stretford	Street-ford	Stratford, Warwicksh.
Sturemuth	Stour-mouth	Harwich
Sumurtun	Summer-town	Sumerton, Somersetsh.
Sumerfetscyre	Summer-feat-division	Somersetshire
Suthberi	South-town	Sudbury, Suffolk
Suth-folc	South-people	Suffolk
Suthrig	South-river-country	Surry
Suth-Seaxe	South-Saxony	Surry and Suffolk
Swanwic	Swaine-town	Swanwick, Hampsh.
Swineshæfed	Swine's-head	Swineshead, Huntingdonsh.

## T

Tamanweorthege	Tame-farm-island	Tamworth, Staffordsh.
Tame	Tame	Tame, Oxfordsh.
Tantun	Twig-town	Taunton, Somersetsh.
Temese	Water-tract	The river Thames
Temesford	Thames-ford	Temsford, Bedfordsh.
Tenet	Tenet	The isle of Thanet, Kent
Thælwæle	Stake-wall	Thelwell, Chesh.
Theodford	People's-ford	Thetford
Thorneic	Thorny-isle	Thorney, Cambridgesh.
Thorp	The village	Thorpe, Northamptonsh.
Trokenholt	Drag-boat-wood	Trokenhole, Cambridgesh.
Tina	Tina	River Tyne, Northumb.
Tinamuth	Tina's-mouth	Tinmouth, Northumb.
Tofceaster	Tof-castle	Toceter, Northampt.
Tonebriege	Town-bridge	Tunbridge, Kent
Treonta	Crooked-river	The river Trent
Turcesige	Boat-island	Torksey
Tweonea	Two-burn-town	Christ-church, Hampsh.

## U

Undale	Undivided	Oundle, Northampt.
Ufa	Water	River Ouse

## W

Wærham	Inclosed-town	Warham, Dorsetsh.
Wæringwic	Fortified-town	Warwick
Wæringfscyre	Fortified-town-division	Warwickshire
Wærlingstret	Beggars-street	Watling-street
Waltun	Wall-town	Walton, Northampt.
Wealingford	Wall-ford	Wallingford, Berksh.
		Wealtham

<i>Saxon Names.</i>	<i>Meaning.</i>	<i>English Names.</i>
Wealtham	Wood-town	Unknown
Weardbyrig	Guard-town	Wardborow, Oxfordsh.
Wecedport	Weced's-habour	Watchet, Somersetsh.
Welmesfort	Sole-foot-ford	Walmsford, Northampt.
Weolud	Weolud	River Welland
Wermington	Warm-town	Warmington, Northampt.
Westmoringland	West-mountain-land	Westmorland
Westmynster	West-monastery	Westminster
West-Seaxe	West-Saxony	Kingdom of Wessex
Westanwudu	Western-wood	Westwood, Wiltsh.
Wetmor	Wet-moor	Wedmore, Somersetsh.
Webbandun	Worm-hill	Wimbleton, Surry
Wegeraceaster	War-castle	Worcester
Wegeraceasterfeyre	War-castle-division	Worcestershire
Wegengamere	War-mere	Wigmore, Herefordsh.
Wihtland	Creature-land	Isle of Wight
Wihtgarabyrig	Wightgar's-town	Carebrook-castle
Wiltun	Willow-town	Wilton, Wiltsh.
Wiltonfeyre	Willow-town-division	Wiltshire
Windlefora	Winding-shore	Windfor
Wintanceaster	Venta-castle	Winchester
Winwidfeld	Victory-field	Near Leeds
Wirhealc	Myrtle-corner	Wirral, Chesh.
Wifebec	Wife-book	Wisbeck
Witham	Near-town	Witham, Essex
Withringtun	Withring's-town	Wirrington, Northampt.
Witlefmere	Wittlefey-mere	Withsmere, Cambridgesh.
Wodnesbeorge	Woden's-town	Wodensburgh, Wiltsh.
Wudestoke	Wood-place	Woodstock, Oxfordsh.
Wudiham	Woody-town	Odiam, Hampsh.
Wippedsfleet	Wipped's-frith	Wippedsfleet, Kent.

## NUMBER II.

A specimen of the most ancient Anglo-Saxon laws, translated from the original Saxon into English\*.

*The laws of Ethelbert, the first Christian king of Kent, who reigned from A. D. 561 to A. D. 616.*

No. II.

1. **LET** sacrilege be compensated twelvefold; the theft of the goods of a bishop, elevenfold; of the goods of a priest, ninefold; of those of a deacon, sixfold; of those of a clerk, threefold; the violation of the peace of a church, twofold; and that of a monastery, twofold.

2. If the king call an assembly of his people, and any damage be done to them there, let it be repaid twofold, and fifty shillings be paid to the king.

3. If the king is at an entertainment in any one's house, and any damage be done there, let it be compensated twofold.

4. If a freeman steal any thing from the king, let him compensate it ninefold.

5. Let him that killeth a man in the city of the king be amerced in fifty shillings.

6. Let him that killeth a freeman pay fifty shillings to the king for his loss of a subject.

7. If any one kill the servants of the king's master-smiths or butler, let him pay the ordinary mulct.

8. Let the violation of the king's patronage be compensated with fifty shillings.

9. If a freeman steal any thing from a freeman, let him repay it threefold; let a mulct be imposed, and all his goods confiscated to the king.

10. If a man lie with the king's maid-servant, being a virgin, let him compensate her virginity with fifty shillings.

11. If she be a grinding-maid, let the compensation be twenty-five shillings; if of the third rank, twelve.

12. Let the violation of the chastity of the king's victualling-maid be compensated with twenty-shillings.

13. Let him that killeth a man in the city of an earl be amerced in twelve shillings.

14. If a man lie with a maid that is an earl's cup-bearer, let him compensate her virginity with twelve shillings.

15. Let the violation of the patronage of a yeoman be compensated with six shillings.

16. Be the violation of the chastity of a maid that is a yeoman's cup-bearer compensated with six shillings; that of a yeoman's other maid-servant, with fifty scætas; and of those of the third rank, thirty scætas.

\* See the original Saxon, with a Latin translation and notes, in Wilkin, *Leges Anglo-Saxonice*, p. 1—7.

## No. II.

17. Let him that first breaketh into another man's house be amerced in six shillings, the second in three shillings, and each of the rest in one shilling.

18. If any one lend a man arms where there is a quarrel, though no harm be done thereby, let him be amerced in six shillings.

19. If a robbery be committed, be it compensated with six shillings.

20. But if a man be killed, let the murderer compensate his death with twenty shillings.

21. If a man kill another, be the ordinary mulct of an hundred shillings imposed upon him.

22. If a man kill another at an open grave, let him compensate his death with twenty shillings, besides the ordinary mulct, which he must pay within forty days.

23. If the homicide fly his country, let his relations pay half the ordinary mulct.

24. Let him that bindeth a freeman make a compensation of twenty shillings.

25. Let the murderer of a yeoman's guest compensate his death with six shillings.

26. But if the landlord killeth his chief guest, let him compensate his death with eighty shillings.

27. If he kills the second, let him make a compensation of sixty shillings; if the third, of forty.

28. If a freeman cut down a hedge, let him make a compensation of six shillings.

29. If a man take away a thing kept within a house, let him compensate it threefold.

30. If a freeman break over a hedge, let him make a compensation of four shillings.

31. Let him that killeth a man make compensation according to the true valuation, in current money.

32. If a freeman lie with a freeman's wife, let him make amends for his crime, by buying another wife for the injured party.

33. If a man prick another in the right thigh, let him compensate the same.

34. If he catches him by the hair, let him pay fifty scætas.

35. If the bone appear, let him make a compensation of three shillings.

36. If the bone be hurt, let him make a compensation of four shillings.

37. If the bone be broke, let him make a compensation of ten shillings.

38. If both be done, let him make a compensation of twenty shillings.

39. If the shoulder be lamed, be it compensated with twenty shillings.

40. If



40. If he is made deaf of an ear, let twenty-five shillings compensate it.

41. If the ear be cut off, be it compensated with twelve shillings.

42. If the ear be bored through, let three shillings be the compensation.

43. If the ear be clipped off, be six shillings the compensation.

44. If the eye be struck out, let fifty shillings compensate it.

45. If the mouth or eye be injured, let twelve shillings make a compensation.

46. If the nose be bored through, let nine shillings be the compensation.

47. If but one membrane is bored, be three shillings the compensation.

48. If both, be six shillings the compensation.

49. If both nostrils are slit, let each be compensated by six shillings.

50. If bored, by six shillings.

51. Let him that cutteth off the chin-bone make a compensation of twenty shillings.

52. For each of the four fore-teeth be compensated six shillings; for the one that stands next, four shillings; for the next, three shillings; and for each of the rest, one shilling: if it be an impediment to his speech, be twelve shillings compensated; and if the jaw-bone be broke, six shillings.

53. Be the bruising of a man's arm compensated with six shillings, and the breaking of it with six shillings.

54. If the thumb be cut off, let it be compensated with twenty shillings; the nail of the thumb, with three shillings; the fore-finger, with eight shillings; the mid-finger, with four shillings; the ring-finger, with six shillings; the little-finger, with eleven shillings.

55. For each nail, a shilling.

56. For the least blemish, three shillings; and for greater ones, six shillings.

57. If any one give another a blow on the nose with his fist, three shillings.

58. If it be wounded, one shilling.

59. If the stroke be black without the clothes, let it be compensated with thirty scætas; if within the clothes, with twenty scætas.

60. If the diaphragm be wounded, let it be compensated by twelve shillings; if bored, by twenty.

61. If one is made to halt, let it be compensated by thirty shillings.

62. If one wound the callus, let thirty shillings be the recompence.

63. If

## No. II.

63. If a man's privy member be cut off, let it be compensated by thrice the ordinary mulct; if it is bored, by six shillings; if cut, by six shillings.

64. If a man's thigh be broke, let twelve shillings be the recompence; if it is lamed, let the friends judge.

65. If a rib be broke, let it be compensated with three shillings.

66. If the thigh be pricked, for every prick be paid six shillings; if it be an inch deep, one shilling; if two inches, two shillings; if above three inches, three shillings.

67. If a vertebra be wounded, let it be compensated with three shillings.

68. If the foot be cut off, with fifty shillings.

69. If the great toe be cut off, with ten shillings.

70. For each of the rest of the toes, be paid half the price, as is enacted of the fingers.

71. Let thirty scætas compensate the nail of the great toe, and ten scætas each of the rest.

72. If a free-woman, wearing her hair, do any thing dishonourable, let her compensate it by thirty shillings.

73. Let the compensation of a virgin be the same as that of a freeman.

74. Let the violation of the patronage of the chief widow of a noble family be compensated by fifty shillings; of the next, with twenty; of the third, by twelve; and of the fourth, by six.

75. If a man marry a widow who is not at her own disposal, let him twice compensate the violated patronage.

76. If a man buy a maid with his money, let her stand for bought, if there is no fraud in the bargain; but if there be, let her be returned home, and the purchaser's money restored him.

77. If she bring forth any live issue, let her have half of the man's goods, if he die first.

78. If she has a mind to depart, with her children, let her have the half of his estate.

79. If the husband will keep his goods, he must keep his children.

80. If she have no issue, let her relations have the goods and the dowry.

81. If a man take a maid by force, let him pay fifty shillings to her first master, and afterwards redeem her, according to his pleasure.

82. If she be before betrothed to another, let him make a recompence of twenty shillings.

83. If she be with child, let him pay thirty-five shillings, and fifteen shillings to the king.

84. If a man lie with the wife of a servant, while her husband is alive, let him make a double recompence.

85. If

85. If a slave kill another slave, being innocent, let him compensate his death with all his substance. No. II.

86. If a servant's eye and foot be struck off, let it be compensated.

87. If a man binds another's servant, let him make a recompence of six shillings.

88. Let the robbing of a servant be compensated with three shillings.

89. If a servant steal any thing, let him restore the same double.

### N U M B E R III.

Catalogue, Latin and English, of the works of Venerable Bede, printed at Cologne, A. D. 1612, in eight volumes folio\*.

#### VOLUME FIRST contains,

1. **CUNABULA** grammaticæ artis, Donati.  
*The rudiments of the grammatical art, according to Donatus.*

No. III.

2. De octo partibus orationis, liber.  
*Of the eight parts of speech, one book.*

3. De arte metrica, liber.  
*Of the metrical art, one book.*

4. De schematibus scripturæ, liber.  
*Of the figures in scripture, one book.*

5. De tropis sacræ scripturæ, liber.  
*Of the tropes in holy scripture, one book.*

6. De orthographia, liber.  
*Of orthography, one book.*

7. De arithmeticiis numeris, liber.  
*Of arithmetical numbers, one book.*

8. De Computo, dialogus.  
*Of computation, a dialogue.*

9. De divisionibus temporum, liber.  
*Of the divisions of time, one book.*

10. De arithmeticiis propositionibus.  
*Of arithmetical propositions.*

11. De ratione calculi.  
*Of the ratio of calculation.*

\* I have taken the catalogue of Bede's works from the Cologne edition of A. D. 1612, because it is the only complete one I have had an opportunity of consulting.

- No. III. 12. De numerorum divisione.  
*Of the division of numbers.*
13. De loquela per gestum digitorum, libellus.  
*Of speaking by the motion of the fingers, a small book.*
14. De ratione unciarum, libellus.  
*Of the ratio of ounces, a small book.*
15. De argumentis lunæ.  
*An argument concerning the moon.*
16. Ephemeris, sive computus vulgaris.  
*The ephemeris, or vulgar computation.*
17. De embolismorum ratione computus.  
*The ratio of calculating intercalations.*
18. Decennovenales circuli.  
*Of the cycle of nineteen years.*
19. De cyclo paschali.  
*Of the paschal cycle.*
20. De mundi cœlestis terrestisque constitutione, liber.  
*Of the constitution of the celestial and terrestrial world, one book.*
21. De musica theorica.  
*Of theoretical music.*
22. De musica quadrata, seu mensurata.  
*Of the quadrature, or mensuration of music.*
23. De circulis sphæræ et poli.  
*Of the circles of the sphere and pole.*
24. De planetarum et signorum cœlestium ratione.  
*Of the ratio of the planetary and celestial, signs.*
25. De tonitruis, libellus.  
*Of thunder, a small book.*
26. Prognostica temporum.  
*Prognostics of the seasons.*
27. De mensura horologii, libellus.  
*Of the mensuration of a sun-dial, a small book.*
28. De astrolabio, libellus.  
*Of the astrolabe, a small book.*
29. De nativitate infantium libellus.  
*Of the nativity of infants, a small book.*
30. De minutione sanguinis, libellus.  
*Of blood-letting, a small book.*
31. De septem mundi miraculis, libellus.  
*Of the seven wonders of the world, a small book.*
32. Hymni.  
*Hymns.*
33. De ratione computi, libellus.  
*Of the ratio of computation, a small book.*

VOLUME SECOND contains,

34. De natura rerum, liber.  
*Of the nature of things, one book.*



35. De temporum ratione, liber.  
*Of the ratio of times, one book.*
36. De sex ætatibus mundi, sive chronica, libellus.  
*Of the six ages of the world, a chronicle, a small book.*
37. De temporibus, liber.  
*Of times, one book.*
38. Sententiæ ex Aristotele.  
*Sentences out of Aristotle.*
39. Sententiæ ex Cicerone, sive axiomata philosophica,  
*Sentences out of Cicero, or philosophical axioms.*
40. Proverbiorum, liber.  
*Of proverbs, one book.*
41. De substantiis.  
*Of substances.*
42. Περὶ διδασκῶν, sive elementorum philosophiæ, libri quatuor.  
*Of doctrines, or the elements of philosophy, four books.*
43. De Paschæ celebratione, sive de æquinoctio vernali, liber.  
*Of the celebration of Easter, or of the æternal equinox, one book.*
44. De divinatione mortis et vitæ, epistola.  
*Of the foretelling of life and death, an epistle.*
45. De arca Noe.  
*Of Noah's ark.*
46. De linguis gentium.  
*Of the languages of nations.*
47. Sibyllina oracula.  
*Sybilline oracles.*

## VOLUME THIRD contains,

48. Gentis Anglorum ecclesiastica historia, libri quinque.  
*The ecclesiastical history of the English nation, five books.*
49. Epitome ejusdem historiæ.  
*Abridgment of the same history.*
50. Vita D. Cuthberti.  
*The life of St. Cutbbert.*
51. Vita D. Felicis.  
*The life of St. Felix.*
52. Vita D. Vedasti.  
*The life of St. Vedast.*
53. Vita D. Columbani.  
*The life of St. Columban.*
54. Vita D. Attalæ.  
*The life of St. Attala.*
55. Vita D. Patricii, libri duo.  
*The life of St. Patrick, two books.*
56. Vita D. Eustasii.  
*The life of St. Eustasius.*
57. Vita D. Bertolfi.  
*The life of St. Bertolf.*

No. III.

58. Vita D. Arnolfi.

*The life of St. Arnolf.*

59. Vita D. Burgundoforæ.

*The life of St. Burgundofora.*

60. Justinii martyrium, carmine.

*The martyrdom of Justin, a poem.*

61. Martyrologium.

*A martyrology.*

62. De situ urbis Hierusalem.

*Of the situation of the city of Jerusalem.*

63. Interpretatio nominum Hebraicorum et Græcorum in Sacris Bibliis.

*An interpretation of the Hebrew and Greek names in the Holy Bible.*

64. Excerptiones et collectanea quædam.

*Certain excerpts and collections.*

## VOLUME FOURTH contains,

65. Hexameron.

*On the six days creation.*

66. In Genesin expositio.

*Expanation of Genesis.*

67. In Exodum explanatio.

*Explanation of Exodus.*

68. In Leviticum explanatio.

*Explanation of Leviticus.*

69. In librum Numeri explanatio.

*Explanation of the book of Numbers.*

70. In Deuteronomium explanatio.

*Explanation of Deuteronomy.*

71. In Samuelum prophetam allegorica expositio, libri quatuor.

*An allegorical explanation of the prophet Samuel, four books.*

72. In libros Regum quæstiones.

*Questions on the books of Kings.*

73. In Esdram et Neemiam prophetam, allegorica expositio, libri tres.

*An allegorical explanation of the prophets Esdras and Nehemiah, three books.*

74. In librum Tobixæ expositio allegorica.

*An allegorical explanation of the book of Tobit.*

75. In Jobum expositio, libri tres.

*Explanation of Job, three books.*

76. In Parabolas Salomonis expositio, libri tres.

*Explanation of the Proverbs of Solomon, three books.*

77. In Cantica Canticorum expositio, libri septem.

*Explanation of the song of songs, seven books.*

78. De tabernaculo et vasis ejus, ac vestibus sacerdotum, libri duo. No. III.

*Of the tabernacle and its utensils, and of the vestments of the priests, two books.*

VOLUME FIFTH contains,

79. In Matthæum expositio, libri quatuor.  
*Exposition on St. Matthew, four books.*  
80. In Marcum expositio, libri quatuor.  
*Exposition on St. Mark, four books.*  
81. In Lucam expositio, libri sex.  
*Exposition on St. Luke, six books.*  
82. In Joannem expositio.  
*Exposition on St. John.*  
83. In Acta Apostolorum expositio.  
*Exposition on the Acts of the Apostles.*  
84. De nominibus locorum vel civitatum, quæ in libro Actuum Apostolorum leguntur.  
*Of the names of places and cities mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles.*  
85. In D. Jacobi epistolam expositio.  
*Exposition on the epistle of St. James.*  
86. In primam D. Petri epistolam expositio.  
*Exposition on the first epistle of St. Peter.*  
87. In secundam ejusdem epistolam expositio.  
*Exposition on the second epistle of the same.*  
88. In primam B. Joannis epistolam expositio.  
*Exposition on the first epistle of St. John.*  
89. In secundam ejusdem epistolam expositio.  
*Exposition on the second epistle of the same.*  
90. In tertiam ejusdem epistolam expositio.  
*Exposition on the third epistle of the same.*  
91. In epistolam Judæ Apostoli expositio.  
*Exposition of the epistle of St. Jude.*  
92. In Apocalypsim Joannis Apostoli explanatio.  
*Exposition on the Revelations of St. John.*

VOLUME SIXTH contains,

93. Retractiones in Actus Apostolorum.  
*Retractions on the Acts of the Apostles.*  
94. Quæstiones in Acta Apostolorum, sex.  
*Six questions on the Acts of the Apostles.*  
95. In epistolam Pauli ad Romanos, expositio.  
*Exposition on the epistle of St. Paul to the Romans.*  
96. In epistolam Pauli priorem ad Corinthios, expositio.  
*Exposition on the first epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians.*

No. III.

97. In epistolam Pauli posteriorem ad Corinthios, expositio.  
*Exposition on the second epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians.*
98. In epistolam Pauli ad Galatas, expositio.  
*Exposition on the epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians.*
99. In epistolam Pauli ad Ephesios, expositio.  
*Exposition on the epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians.*
100. In epistolam Pauli ad Philippenses, expositio.  
*Exposition on the epistle of St. Paul to the Phillippians.*
101. In epistolam Pauli ad Colossenses, expositio.  
*Exposition on the epistle of St. Paul to the Colossians.*
102. In epistolam Pauli priorem ad Thessalonicenses, expositio.  
*Exposition on the first epistle of St. Paul to the Thessalonians.*
103. In epistolam Pauli posteriorem ad Thessalonicenses, expositio.  
*Exposition on the second epistle of St. Paul to the Thessalonians.*
104. In epistolam Pauli primam ad Timotheum, expositio.  
*Exposition on the first epistle of St. Paul to Timothy.*
105. In epistolam Pauli secundam ad Timotheum, expositio.  
*Exposition on the second epistle of St. Paul to Timothy.*
106. In epistolam Pauli ad Titum, expositio.  
*Exposition on the epistle of St. Paul to Titus.*
107. In epistolam Pauli ad Philemonem, expositio.  
*Exposition on the epistle of St. Paul to Philemon.*
108. In epistolam Pauli ad Hebræos, expositio.  
*Exposition on the epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews.*
109. Aniani epistola ad Evangelium, presbyterum.  
*Epistle of Anianus to Evangelus, a presbyter.*
110. Joannis Chrysostomi epistola de laudibus beati Pauli Apostoli.  
*Epistle of John Chrysostom, in praise of the blessed Apostle Paul.*

## VOLUME SEVENTH contains,

111. Homiliæ æstivales de tempore, triginta tres.  
*Thirty-seven summer-homilies for the seasons.*
112. Homiliæ æstivales de sanctis, triginta duæ.  
*Thirty-two summer-homilies on the saints.*
113. Homiliæ hyemales de tempore, quindecim.  
*Fifteen winter-homilies for the seasons.*
114. Homiliæ quadragesimales, viginti duæ.  
*Twenty-two homilies for Lent.*
115. Homilia hyemales de sanctis, sedecim.  
*Sixteen winter-homilies on the saints.*
116. Sermones ad populum varii.  
*Sundry sermons to the people.*
117. Scintillæ, sive loci communes.  
*Sparks, or common places.*
118. De muliere forti libellus.  
*Of the strong woman, a small book.*



119. De officiis, libellus.

*Of morals or duties, a small book.*

120. Fragmenta quædam in Libros Sapientiales, et Psalteri  
versus aliquot.

*Fragments on the Book of Wisdom, and some verses of the Psalms.*

VOLUME EIGHTH contains,

121. De templo Salomonis, liber.

*Of the temple of Solomon, one book.*

122. De sex dierum creatione, liber.

*Of the six days creation, one book.*

123. Quæstiones super Genesin.

*Questions on Genesis.*

124. Quæstiones super Exodum.

*Questions on Exodus.*

125. Quæstiones super Leviticum.

*Questions on Leviticus.*

126. Quæstiones super librum Numeri.

*Questions on Numbers.*

127. Quæstiones super Deuteronomium.

*Questions on Deuteronomy.*

128. Quæstiones super librum Jesu Nave.

*Questions on Joshua.*

129. Quæstiones super librum Judicum.

*Questions on Judges.*

130. Quæstiones super librum Ruth.

*Questions on Ruth.*

131. Quæstiones super quatuor libros Regum.

*Questions on the four books of Kings.*

132. Quæstionum variarum, liber.

*Of various questions, one book.*

133. In Psalmorum librum commentaria.

*Commentaries on the book of Psalms.*

134. Vocabulorum Psalterii expositio.

*Exposition of the words of the Psalms.*

135. Sermo de eo, quod in Psalmis legitur, " Dominus de  
cælo prospexit," &c.

*A sermon on this passage in the Psalms,—“ The Lord looked  
down from heaven.”*

136. In Boethii librum de Trinitate, commentarius.

*Commentary on the book of Boethius on the Trinity.*

137. De septem verbis Christi, oratio.

*An oration on the seven words of Christ.*

138. Meditationes passionis Christi per septem diei horas.

*Meditations on Christ's passion, for seven hours of the day.*

139. De remediis peccatorum.

*Of the remedies of sins.*

No. III. Beda, besides all the above works, was the author of several other tracts which have been published, and of some which are still in MS\*. This sufficiently proves, that, considering the times in which he flourished, and the manifold disadvantages under which he laboured, he was one of the most studious and ingenious men that this island ever produced.

\* See Biographia Britannica, t. 1. p. 651, 652.

## N U M B E R IV.

The Lord's Prayer, in the Anglo-Saxon and other kindred languages, derived from the ancient Gothic or Teutonic.

### I. ANGLO-SAXON.

No. IV.

U R E N Fader thic arth in Heofnas. 1. Sie gehalgud thin Noma. 2. To cymeth thin Ryc. 3. Sie thin Willa sue is in Heofnas, and in Eortho, 4. Uren Hlaf oferwiftlic fel us to deag. 5. And forgefe us Scylda urna, sue we forgesan Scyldgum urum. 6. And no inlead usig in Custnung. 7. Ah gefrig usich from Isle. Amen.

### 2. FRANCO-THEOTISC.

Fater unser thu thar bist in Himile. 1. Si geheilagot thin Namu. 2. Queme thin Rihhi. 3. Si thin Willo, so her in Himile ist o si her in Erdu. 4. Unsar Brot tagalihhaz gib uns huitu. 5. Inti furlaz uns nufara Sculdi so unir furlazames unsaron Sculdigon. 6. Inti ni gileiteft unsih in Costunga. 7. Uzouh arlosh unsi son Ubile. Amen,

### 3. CIMBRIC.

Fader uor som est i Himlum. 1. Halgad warde thitt Nama. 2. Tilkomme thitt Rikie. 3. Skie thin Vilie, so som i Himmalam, so och po Iordanné. 4. Wort dachlicha Brodh gif os i dagh. 5. Ogh forlat os uora Sculdar, so som ogh vi forlate them os Skildighe are. 6. Ogh inled os ikkie i Frestal san. 7. Utan frels os isra Ondo. Amen.

### 4. BELGIC.

Onse Vader die daer zijt in de Hamelen. 1. Uwen Naem worde gheheylight. 2. U Rijke kome. 3. Uwen Wille gheschiede op der Aerden, gelyck in den Hemel. 4. Onse dagelijck

dagelijckt Broodt gheeft ons heden. 5. Ende vergheeft ons No. IV.  
 onse Schulden, ghelijck wyooock onse Schuldenaren vergeven.           
 6. Ende en leyt ons niet in Versoeckinge. 7. Maer verlost  
 ons vanden Boosen. Amen.

### 5. FRISIC.

Ws Haita duu derstu biste yne Hymil. 1. Dyn Name wird  
 heilicht. 2. Dyn Rick tokomme. 3. Dyn Wille moet schoen,  
 opt Yrtryck as yne Hymile. 4. Ws deilix Bræ jov ws jwed.  
 5. In verjou ws, ws Schylden, as wy vejac ws Schyldnirs.  
 6. In lied ws naet in Versieking. 7. Din fry us vin it Quæd.  
 Amen.

### 6. HIGH-DUTCH.

Unser Vater in dem Himmel. 1. Dein Name werde geheiliget.  
 2. Dein Reich komme. 3. Dein Will geschehe auf  
 Erden, wie im Himmel. 4. Unser taeglich Brodt gib uns  
 heute. 5. Und vergib uns unsere Schulden, wie wir unsern  
 Schuldigern vergeben. 6. Und fuehre uns nicht in Versuchung.  
 7. Sondern erloese uns von dem Vbel. Amen.

### 7. SUEVIAN.

Fatter aufar dear du bischt em Hemmal. 1. Gehoyliget  
 wearde dain Nam. 2. Zuakomme dain Reych. 3. Dain  
 Will gschea uff Earda es em Hemmal. 4. Aufar deglich  
 Braud gib as hoyt. 5. Und fergiab as aufre Schulda, wia wiar  
 fergaeba aufarn Schuldigearn. 6. Und fuar as net ind Fer-  
 fuaching. 7. Sondern erlais as fom Ibal. Amen.

### 8. SWISS.

Vatter unser, der du bist in Himlen. 1. Geheyligt werd  
 dyn Nam. 2. Zukumm uns dijn Rijch. 3. Dyn Will ges-  
 chahe, wie im Himmel, also auch uff Erden. 4. Gib uns hut  
 unser taglich Brod. 5. Und vergib uns unsere Sculden, wie  
 anch wir vergaben unsern Schuldneren. 6. Und fahr uns nicht  
 in Versuchnyts. 7. Sunder erlos uns von dem Bosen. Amen.

### 9. ICELANDIC.

Fader vor thu som ert a Himnum. 1. Helgest thitt Nasn.  
 2. Tilkome thitt Riike. 3. Verde thinn Vilie, so a Jordu,  
 sem a Himne. 4. Gieff thu ofs i dag vort daglegt Braud.  
 5. Og hiergieff ofs vorar Skulder, so sem vier tierergiefum  
 vorum Skuldinautum. 6. Og inleid ofs ecke i Freistne.  
 7. Heldr stelsa thu ofs fra Illu. Amen.

### 10. NORWEGIAN.

Wor Fader du som est y Himmelen. 1. Gehailiget worde  
 did Nasn. 2. Tilkomma os Riga dit. 3. Din Wilia gestkia  
 paa

No. IV. paa Iorden, som handt er udi Himmelen. 4. Giff os y Dag wort dagliga Brouta. 5. Och forlaet os wort Skioldt, som wy forlata wora Skioldon. 6. Och lad os icke homma voi Fristelse. 7. Man frals os fra Onet. Amen.

## II. DANISH.

Vor Fader i Himmelen. 1. Helligt vorde dit Navn. 2. Tilkomme dit Rige. 3. Vorde din Villie, paa Iorden som i Himmelen. 4. Giff ofs i Dag Vort daglige Bred. 5. Oc forlad ofs vor Skyld, som wi forlade vore Skyldener. 6. Oc leede ofs icke i Fristelse. 7. Men frels os fra Ont. Amen.

## 12. SWEDISH.

Fader war som ast i Himmelen. 1. Helgat warde titt Nampn. 2. Till komme titt Ricke. 3. Skei tin Willie saa paa Iordenne, som i Himmelen. 4. Wart dagliga Brod giff ofs i Dag. 5. Och forlat ofs wara Skulder sa som ock wi forlaten them ofs Skildege aro. 6. Och inleed ofs ickle i Fristelse. Ut an frals ofs i fra Ondo. Amen.









